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# THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON VIOLENCE IN THE COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

## RESEARCH REPORT

Television Crime Drama:  
A Mythological Interpretation

James Taylor  
Section de Communication  
Département de Psychologie  
Université de Montréal

1976





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The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry, whose conclusions will be presented in its Final Report.



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La série policière à la télévision:  
vers une analyse mythologique

L'hypothèse de base qui soustend la présente recherche est la suivante: toute société, primitive ou moderne, se base sur une conceptualisation de l'action humaine qui s'exprime en mythes. Dans notre société, la télévision sert de véhicule pour la transmission de nos patterns mythologiques. La série policière occupe un rôle particulier dans la transmission de nos valeurs sociales -- c'est l'équivalent contemporain du mythe ancien.

La mythologie, ou la science des mythes, a reçu son impulsion contemporaine de la publication de deux documents, Morphologie du Conte de Vladimir Propp (originellement publié en russe en 1928, mais traduit en anglais seulement vers la fin des années '50, et en français en 1970), et The Structural Study of Myth de Claude Lévi-Strauss (publié d'abord en anglais en 1955, mais paru en français en 1958). Le premier de ces travaux mettait l'accent surtout sur les propriétés formelles du récit; l'oeuvre de Lévi-Strauss, par contre, se concentre davantage sur la signification cachée de l'histoire.





Une contribution fondamentale de Propp c'est d'avoir identifié des unités de base narratives. Il a observé certaines constructions logiques qui apparaissaient régulièrement dans le corpus de cent contes de fées russes qu'il analysait. Les suivants peuvent servir d'exemples:

- Le roi donne à Ivan un cheval; le cheval l'emporte dans un pays étranger.
- Le magicien donne à l'héros un bateau; le bateau l'emporte dans un royaume lointain.

Il est évident qu'il existe une ressemblance fondamentale entre les deux évènements: quelqu'un (un donateur) fournit à quelqu'un (un agent) un cadeau magique (l'instrument de transport), et l'agent est emporté par le cadeau à une région physiquement éloignée. Cette partie constante est désignée par Propp comme étant une fonction. La partie variable de l'histoire est fournie par l'insertion des éléments choisis d'un repertoire approprié (un roi, un magicien, etc.).

Ayant fait cette distinction importante entre la partie constante et la partie variable d'une histoire, Propp est arrivé à une conclusion étonnante: les cent contes qu'il analysait, bien que marqués par une variété superficielle très grande, manifestaient



une grande régularité au niveau de leur structure profonde (conçue comme un ensemble ordonné de fonctions). Propp a réussi à identifier une trentaine de fonctions utilisées dans les contes, et a découvert que, dans son corpus, les fonctions apparaissaient toujours dans exactement le même ordre.

L'idée de base de Lévi-Strauss est un peu plus difficile à résumer succinctement. D'abord ce dernier est parti de l'hypothèse que nos concepts incarnent des oppositions bi-polaires. Par exemple, en général les gens conçoivent la mort comme opposée à la vie. (En effet, si l'homme n'était pas mortel, il ne serait pas nécessaire d'avoir un concept de vie.) De façon semblable, le concept de "dessus" suppose un concept complémentaire de "dessous"; l'idée de "est" implique une notion de "ouest"; on ne pourrait que difficilement conceptualiser la notion de "cru" si on n'avait pas un concept de "cuit", et ainsi de suite.





Malheureusement (ou peut-être heureusement) l'expérience de l'homme n'est pas toujours si facilement réduite à des dichotomies. D'ailleurs, la présence de concepts irreconciliables dans la société (la mort s'opposant à la vie, l'angoisse à côté de la sérénité) semble troubler l'esprit humain, et les gens essaient toujours de trouver une manière de résoudre les oppositions, c'est-à-dire de trouver le pont entre la mort et la vie, de reconcilier la présence du bien et du mal au sein d'une seule personnalité, etc. Selon Lévi-Strauss, les grands thèmes de tous les mythes concernent les oppositions qui s'avèrent importants pour une société donnée, et les efforts faits pour trouver une sorte de médiatisation des notions profondément opposées.

Le projet de recherche décrit dans ce rapport avait comme but d'analyser treize émissions de télévision (du genre policier), et de faire une première tentative d'appliquer les méthodes de Propp et de Lévi-Strauss.



Nos résultats étaient encourageants. D'une part la structure de l'émission policière de provenance américaine s'avérait extrêmement régulière. Toutes les émissions examinées avaient une forme commune: un premier crime de violation (souvent mais pas nécessairement marqué par des connotations sexuelles), suivi d'une première réaction d'un gardien de l'ordre social, suivi par un meurtre. Le meurtrier se cache, se déguise, ou cache toute évidence du crime. L'agent de police (le héros de la série) entre et commence son enquête. Il accumule des faits, en déduit l'identité du criminel, souvent arrête le complice du meurtrier, et finalement réussit à vaincre le traître. Entretemps, il entre une troisième personne, destiné à jouer le rôle de médiateur entre le héros et le meurtrier. Cette personne peut être un témoin, un investigateur, un bouc émissaire, etc. Très souvent, ce troisième personnage se trouve menacé par le traître, et est sauvé à la dernière minute par le héros. Dans une étude exploratoire il ne s'est pas avéré possible de fournir un grammaire complet de récits télévisuels; cependant la présente investigation nous a convaincu de la valeur d'une telle entreprise.





Notre analyse nous a également donné l'espoir de pouvoir appliquer la méthode de Lévi-Strauss. Nous avons soumis à une analyse détaillée quatre émissions, tirées de quatre séries différentes, ce qui nous a permis de découvrir l'existence d'un pattern systématique dans les crimes de violation (qui servent à déclencher l'action). Il semble qu'un des thèmes principaux des séries policières, à en juger par notre échantillon limité, serait les relations entre les femmes et les hommes, et plus particulièrement le rôle de la femme dans la société actuelle. Cette confirmation de nos attentes souligne le rôle important des émissions de "divertissement" dans la transmission des valeurs culturelles.

Qu'est-ce que cette analyse peut nous dire par rapport à la question de la violence à l'écran et ses conséquences potentiellement néfastes?

D'abord une distinction entre la violence et la violation s'impose (les deux mots ont une origine commune-le verbe latin violare, "prendre par force"). Une violation constitue une infraction d'une règle fondamentale de la société, très souvent dans des circonstances ambiguës. Par exemple, un étudiant qui



veut réussir ses études avec grande distinction (un but présumément socialement approuvé) choisit comme moyen d'atteindre son objectif de torturer des rats (un "crime" qui se rapproche quand même d'une activité hautement valorisée dans notre société, la recherche scientifique); un employé sénior d'une compagnie internationale se trouve confronter par la tâche de rassembler une quantité de propriétés privées afin que son compagnie puisse construire un nouveau siège social (but socialement approuvé) mais parce qu'il rencontre de l'opposition de la part des propriétaires, il a recours à une campagne d'intimidation (un crime). Dans chacun des cas cités, le crime de violation qui sert de point de départ pour le récit, est aussi un mécanisme qui permet à l'auteur de soulever un problème à la fois moral et sémantique: comment se fait-il que notre progrès médical doit être obtenu au dépens d'un traitement si peu humain des animaux; comment se fait-il que notre progrès économique doit être obtenu au dépens des droits des gens ordinaires?



Si on enlevait la violation, on n'aurait plus la même histoire.

Par contre la violation est toujours accompagnée par la violence, qui est son expression superficielle. Il en découle que la série policière en tant que conte moral, dépend de la violence. Il n'est donc pas surprenant que les mythes de tous les pays sont marqués par la description des actes de violence, même dans les pays où l'observateur serait rarement conscient de la présence de violence ouverte ou même virtuelle.

Ceci ne vaut cependant pas un argument en faveur de la présentation visuelle des actes de violence dans les émissions de télévision. Il veut tout simplement dire que la notion de violence est implicite au genre. Comment la violence est présentée est une autre question. Il faut en même temps reconnaître d'autres facteurs. Par exemple, dans la plupart des sociétés, le contexte du mythe est clairement distingué de la réalité quotidienne de l'auditoire, l'action se passe dans un passé lointain et souvent fabuleux. Même dans les "Westerns", populaires avant la série policière, le contexte était loin d'être réaliste. Par contre, la série policière prétend représenter une réalité plus rapprochée. Les conséquences de cette différence restent à évaluer.





## SECTION I

### A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO MYTHOLOGY

## Objectives of this report

No society can live without myths. Myths provide the substructure of our collective social experience. A basic postulate of the present research is that television crime dramas are a vehicle for the communication of the dominant mythic patterns of contemporary American society, and that within this genre, the portrayal of violence is a key element of mythic modes of expression.

In this introductory section, three questions are posed:

1) What is myth? 2) Why should the use of a mythic model be particularly informative about certain aspects of present-day television? 3) What will a mythic analysis tell us about the role of violence in television?

Following the discussion of these three questions, we turn briefly to consider one or two methodological issues that arise in connection with the present research.

### What is myth?

#### Some traditional conceptualizations

Mythology or the study of myth, has until recently been something of a stepchild in the human sciences.

There has existed a persistent undercurrent of interest in the nature and function of myth ever since the advent of the social sciences as an organized form of scientific activity: one thinks of the nineteenth century work of the Grimms, Tylor and Fraser, to mention only a few.

The great French sociologists Durkheim and Mauss were the first to conceptualize ritual and myth as collective representations, or ways of perceiving the world, exemplified in language. Freud borrowed from myth to explain psychic dynamics (the most famous example being the "Oedipus complex"). Jung saw myth exemplifying archetypal modes of thought, by means of which communities structure their perceptions of the world around them. Cassirer perceived myth as metaphor; Lasswell emphasized the role of "justifying symbols" in politics.

Yet, in spite of isolated exceptions, the study of myth has remained essentially at the periphery of the social scientist's field of preoccupations. Anthropologists (or more exactly ethnologists), whose domain proper myth is, have tended to preoccupy themselves with tangible phenomena such as the structure of economic and kinship systems. In communication studies, myth has over the years been increasingly relegated to the lowly status of "entertainment" (Wright, 1959). The very use of the term "entertainment" connotes a subtle but real denigration of the role of story-telling, compared with more socially "responsible" functions such as providing news, discussion of public issues, and educational broadcasting.

But for every hour spent watching "socially responsible" programming, the average viewer puts in at least two being entertained. (See Caron's report for the Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry on television viewing habits.) One may be led to suspect a bias inherent in the narrowly utilitarian point of view which has so often prevailed in public discussions of the role of the media in our society.

One goal of this study is to redress to some extent that bias, and to bring the function of "entertainment" into a more realistic perspective.

### A Metalanguage for myth: modern approaches

One continuing problem has been the absence of a language for talking about myth. Given the immense superficial variety of myth (and of television production), a systematic procedure has to be developed by which the range of surface representations can be reduced to a manageable set of basic forms, where underlying patterns and regularities become more easily identifiable. In the language of the linguist, we need a grammar of myth.

### Vladimir Propp

The contemporary study of myth may be said to have begun with the work of a group of Russian folklorists, of whom the best known in the West is Vladimir Propp. (And even the latter's work was not translated into English until 1958, or into French until 1965.)

Propp took as his basic material one hundred Russian folktales, collected by the folklorists Aarne and Thompson. He observed that stories are constructed out of simpler constituent elements, which he termed functions. These simpler elements, or functions, could be quite easily arranged into classes, on the basis of apparent structural similarities. The examples he gives illustrate the point:



1. The king gives the hero an eagle; the eagle carries off the hero to another kingdom.
2. Grandfather gives the hero a horse; the horse carries the hero away to another kingdom.
3. A magician gives the hero a boat; the hero is transported by the boat to another kingdom.
4. The queen gives the hero a ring; imps emerge from the ring and carry the hero off to another kingdom.

While each time the content is different--the hero changes, the gift is altered, the source of the gift varies, as well as the agent responsible for removing the hero to another place--still it appears that in some important sense the structure of events in the four examples is identical.

Stories can be generated by combining functions in appropriate sequence (providing that the characters are properly cross-indexed from one story element to another). This discovery by Propp provides the beginning of a language for talking about myths, and for comparing them.

Propp's analysis of his corpus of a hundred stories led him to some rather surprising conclusions:

- 1) That what is permanent, or constant, in a set of folktales is the list of functions, or basic story elements, while what changes is the identification of persons involved in the action, and the manner in which a given function (e.g., the form which transportation to a far-off land takes) is accomplished;

- 2) The repertoire of functions used in fairy tales is finite, and indeed quite restricted;
- 3) The functions always appear within stories in the same order (although not every function appears in every tale--there are omissions);
- 4) Every story in his sample was a simple variant of one basic story, with the same essential structure, and built up out of the same set of story elements.

This final conclusion, that, within a given genre, and in spite of surface dissimilarities, every story can be derived by appropriate transformations from one basic story model, was to prove a tremendous stimulus to the scientific study of myth since it turned attention away from simple recording of tales to the discovery of rules of transformation which explain the surface variety. A procedure based on a finite vocabulary of story elements, and a set of rules (or syntax) for their combination, is immensely powerful. It is already known from linguistic research that an infinite number of sentences can be produced by a finite generative-transformational grammar; it may be speculated similarly that a comparable grammar of myth is capable of generating an infinite number of stories.<sup>1\*</sup>

It is a working hypothesis or postulate of this study that there exists a finite set of basic story plots, and that actual productions are obtained by transformations from more basic forms. It is commonly averred that television is repetitive: I hope to show why and how.

---

\* Footnotes for Section I begin on page 35a.

## Claude Levi-Strauss

A second event of major importance in the developing field of mythologistics occurred in 1955, when the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss published an article entitled "The Structural Study of Myth". Levi-Strauss begins from a rather different starting point than Propp (with whom he does not appear to have been directly familiar at the time). He observes that in spite of the apparent arbitrary arrangement of elements of myth, where every succession of events appears possible, showing no evident logical order or continuity, nevertheless there are astonishing similarities of character and relation which re-occur from myth to myth, throughout the world.

Like Propp, Levi-Strauss sees it as a first necessary step to isolate a basic unit of myth, which he terms a mytheme. A mytheme is defined as a bundle of relationships. What is meant by this can best be seen through an illustration; Levi-Strauss used as example the Oedipus cycle, drawn from Greek mythology. He finds four relational clusters:

1) Kinship relations which are overvalued:

- Cadmos goes in search of his sister Europa,  
raped by Zeus
- Oedipus marries his mother, Jocasta
- Antigone buries her brother, Polynice, in  
spite of an injunction.

2) Kinship relations which are undervalued:

- the Spartoi mutually exterminate each other
- Oedipus kills his father Laios
- Eteocles kills his brother Polynice.

3) The destruction of monsters:

- Cadmos kills the dragons
- Oedipus causes the death of the Sphinx.

4) Difficulties in walking straight:

- the name of Oedipus' grandfather connotes lame or limping
- the name of Oedipus' father connotes awkward or left-footed
- Oedipus' own name connotes swollen-footed.

An inspection of the examples above indicates that, operationally, Levi-Strauss' definition of "mytheme" includes the same or similar story components, as Propp's "function", but at a higher level of abstraction. For example, the killing of his father by Oedipus would presumably have been singled out by Propp as a function; for Levi-Strauss, it contributes to the definition of a mytheme. Thus a certain parallelism between the two approaches is apparent.

The emphasis, however, is quite different: whereas Propp was concerned to establish a syntax, or grammar, of myth, Levi-Strauss is more interested in the semantics, or meaning, of myth. Propp compares the structures of different stories; Levi-Strauss elucidates parallelisms

within a single story. How he accomplishes this for the Oedipus myth illustrates both the power and the apparent artificiality of his method.

Drawing on his knowledge of Greek mythology, Levi-Strauss notes that monsters are born or spring from the earth. They are, that is to say, autochthonous in origin. The killing of the monsters in the Oedipus story stands for the idea of the negation or denial of the autochthonous origin of man. On the other hand, there is, he asserts, a direct association in Greek thought between the idea of being born from the earth and difficulties in walking straight. Hence the fourth cluster stands for the assertion of the autochthonous origin of man. In this sense, the story incorporates a logical contradiction: man cannot be both born directly from the earth and not so born.

Similarly, the first two bundles of relationships incorporate a contradiction: overvaluing of kinship relations is inconsistent with undervaluing of kinship relations.

Now, asserts Levi-Strauss, the meaning of the myth appears:

"...We may now see what (the Oedipus myth) means. The myth has to do with the inability, for a culture which holds the belief that mankind is autochthonous..., to find a satisfactory transition between this theory and the knowledge that human beings are actually born from the union of man and woman. Although the problem obviously cannot be solved, the Oedipus myth provides a kind of logical tool which relates the original problem--born from one or born from two?--to the derivative



problem: born from different or born from same? By a correlation of this type, the overrating of blood relations is to the underrating of blood relations as the attempt to escape autochthony is to the impossibility to succeed in it. Although experience contradicts theory, social life validates cosmology by its similarity of structure. Hence cosmology is true." (Levi-Strauss, 1955, page 212 in the 1967 edition.)

It is possible to gain some insight into the nature of the logical dilemma involved by considering an example closer to home. It will be recalled how slow was the acceptance by our own society in the post-Darwinian era of the "scientific" theory of evolution, which met the resistance of fundamentalist Christian views on the origins of man. According to Christian cosmology, the first man Adam was formed in the image of God from the dust of the ground (exactly as the plants sprung from the ground). The first woman was created from the bone and flesh of Adam (his rib). They then knew each other, Eve conceived and their first-born son Cain was the fruit of their union.

Note the inherent contradiction: if to be a man is to be born of the union of two persons, then by this definition Adam was not a man, yet we are told that Adam was the first man. Since he is the father of all mankind, he must be a man, but since he had only a father and no mother, he cannot be a man. He must accordingly either be a monster, or divine. Genesis makes it clear that Adam is at least semi-divine, in that he is in the likeness of God, and needed only to know good and evil, and to live forever to become, in the Lord's words, "as one of us".

In the view of some psychologists, the holding of basically inconsistent beliefs leaves a residue of what is called technically "cognitive dissonance", which, even where the inconsistency is suppressed, may result in discomfort. The myth of the origins of man, with its profound religious significance, cannot be questioned by the orthodox. But, according to Levi-Strauss, the logical problem can be attacked through myth. Oedipus flees the home of his foster-parents (whom he believes to be his parents) in order to escape from the prophecy that he will kill his father and marry his mother, and in fleeing he inadvertantly fulfills the prophecy. The ambiguity in the identity of his parents mirrors the ambiguity of born from one versus born from two.

If the reader continues to experience some bewilderment after reading the above, it should be of some consolation to him or her to know that his or her inability to follow all of Levi-Strauss' deductive leaps is shared by many of the latter's own colleagues and most ardent admirers (see Leach (1967) for extensive discussion). Turner (1969), for example, has offered a more exhaustive (and in my view more persuasive) analysis of the Oedipus myth, from which a different meaning is inferred. His interpretation turns on three dichotomies: kinship/non-kinship, male/female, immature/mature. With respect to each of these semantic distinctions, there exist social rules and taboos. Turner argues that the Oedipus myth was written down at a turbulent period of Greek history when the role of the powerful clans was in question, making salient questions of kinship relations and generational succession; thus Turner sets aside the cosmological issue in favour of a more sociologically-oriented explanation.

Like Turner, we may take issue with Levi-Strauss about the details of an interpretation without disagreeing on the validity of the method. At times, however, we are likely to be astonished by the complexity of meaning, based on symmetrical semantic contrasts of the type described above, which Levi-Strauss reveals by application of the method to apparently simple story material. Yet even the skeptical anthropologist Douglas, after a careful analysis of his method, as applied to an Indian myth from Canada's West Coast, is led to concede: "Some may have doubted that myths can have an elaborate symmetrical structure. If so, they should be convinced of their error... Although I have suggested that the symmetry has here and there been pushed too hard, the structure is indisputably there, in the material and not merely in the eye of the beholder." (Douglas, 1967, p. 56.)

In the story in question, Levi-Strauss shows that the movement of the story turns around distinctions between East/West, Earth/Heaven, mountain-hunting/sea-hunting, endogamous/exogamous marriage patterns, feast/famine, etc., all dimensions which reflected elements in the reality of the Tsimshian life experience. It is astonishing to discover on analysis to what an extent the regular pattern of contrasts of the story reminds one of the orderly design of a musical composition (a comparison which is often employed by Levi-Strauss himself).

What Levi-Strauss' seminal work has accomplished is to take myth out of the nursery, and out of the Freudian bedroom, and to give it a place in the study. Story-telling can no longer be thought of as "mere" entertainment. What he asserts is that within the over-arching ideology

of every society contradictions exist: both internal contradictions, and also contradictions in the sense that the ideology can with difficulty be squared with ordinary experience. Story-telling becomes a "logical tool", appealing to a pre-conscious set of reasoning processes, by which such contradictions can be explored, if not resolved, through the use of metaphor and metonymy. Hence the myth often serves to re-affirm basic beliefs within a society, but it can also be a means of dealing with the emerging themes of conflict within rapidly changing societies. We mean to argue that television plays may address intellectual issues, and may state them with clarity, just as much as a public affairs discussion show.

As Turner (1969) asserts: "At the level of specific content, narratives such as myths and tales typically concern the most obsessive, complex and problematic situations and relationships of the social order: family relations and life crises, animal beings in hunting cultures, lineage relations and succession in societies with unilineal descent groups, etc. Symbolic narratives, in short, represent cultural models for coping with typical patterns of subjective stress involved in the orientation of individuals to problematic situations in their social and cultural orders. They are, in a sense, meta-categories, dealing with the reintegration of divergent and often traumatic individual experience with the normative order of categories." (pp. 35-6)

### The Culinary Triangle

In fairness to Levi-Strauss, it should be recalled that the quotation from his 1955 article reflects an early attempt to apply a

method which he had at the time not yet perfected. In the meantime, he has documented his method in the form of a massive work in four volumes, called Mythologiques, containing an almost overwhelming wealth of illustrative detail. In the process he has refined his ideas and his analytic techniques. One concept in particular, which he has developed, will be employed in the sequel: this is the concept of the culinary triangle. The idea is presented here in general outline.

To grasp the principle of the culinary triangle, it may help to say a word about the derivation of the principle.<sup>2</sup> In linguistics, it has been proposed that our perception of the basic sounds of language utilizes a limited number of binary distinctions. For example, the consonants f, th, h, p, t, k, b, d, g form a system explained by the operation of two kinds of distinctive features, based on phonetic categories of voiced/unvoiced, and fricative/non-fricative.<sup>3</sup>

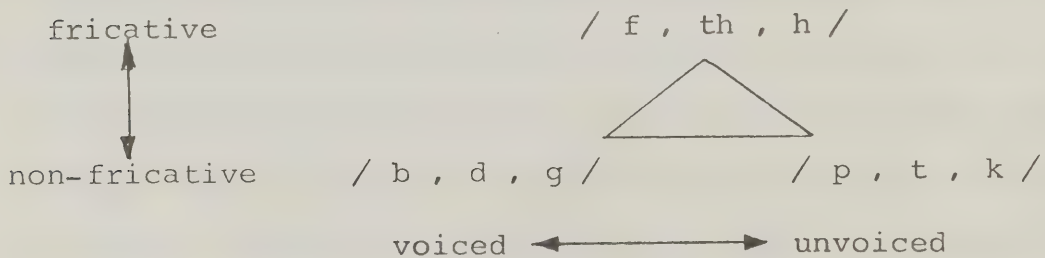


Figure 1: An example of a consonant system defined by distinctive features

Levi-Strauss asserts that this principle of basic bipolar dimensions underlies not only our discrimination of the sounds of spoken language, but also our perception of meaning.



For example, let us consider the meaning of the concept "food".

First we note that food may either be eaten immediately in its raw state, or it may undergo some transformation before it is eaten, usually including a form of decomposition. Hence the first dimension along which food can be evaluated is the following:

Original state  $\longleftrightarrow$  Transformed state

If the transformation is allowed to take its "natural" course, the raw food spoils or becomes rotten. Often, "spoiled" food is rejected as inedible.<sup>4</sup> It is then thought of as carrion and the animals who feed on such food are treated with disgust (e.g., the jackal, the buzzard, etc.).

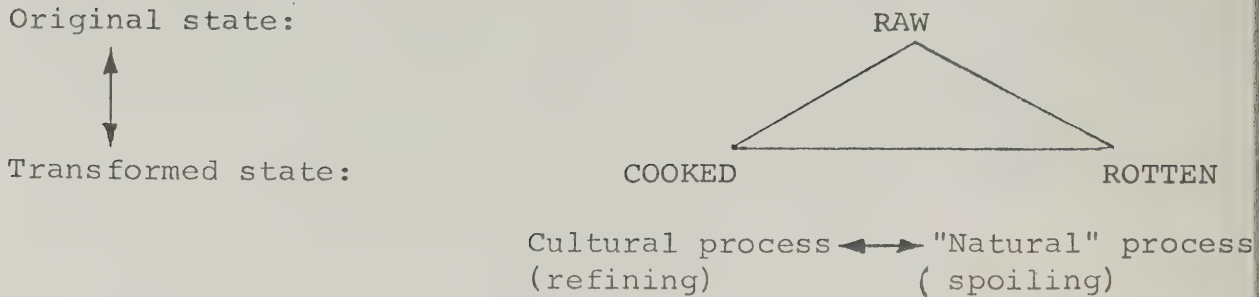
If the transformation takes the form of cooking, then there has been an intervention of a cultural process. The cooking process is a refining of the original, untransformed food (where the term "refining" is used in the same sense as in the expression "oil refining"), and cooked food is universally thought to be fit for human consumption.

Hence the second dimension is:

Intervention of a cultural process  $\longleftrightarrow$  Intervention of a "natural" process



This leads to an identification of the "culinary triangle":



\* "Natural" in the sense of spontaneous, or unchecked, or uncivilized

Figure 2 : The "Culinary Triangle"

Two points should be emphasized: 1) the semantic classification of food with respect to two underlying dimensions corresponds to categories which are universally recognized as valid; and 2) the classification is more than purely semantic: it helps to explain why certain foods are socially taboo, and why we experience such strong emotional reactions to categories of food when we travel "abroad". Even when we know, "rationally", that a food is good to eat, and even delicious to the taste, we may think of it with abhorrence. The taste, in our society, for raw oysters and "rare" roast beef, is far from universal; our eating preferences are related to our meaning systems.

Were the schema developed by Levi-Strauss only applicable to culinary phenomena we should not have spent so much time considering it; however we shall see later that the form of conceptualization presented here enables us to interpret other phenomena including such diverse matters as the administration of justice, and sexual behaviour. We shall also observe that the subject matter of television programs is often, if not always, about logically irreconcilable contradictions, which the semantic triangle assists us in deciphering.

### Myth defined

Our notion of what a myth is has been revolutionized.

Pierre Maranda, the internationally renowned Canadian folklorist, has offered the following definition:

"Myths display the structured, predominantly culture-specific, and shared, semantic systems which enable the members of a culture area to understand each other and to cope with the unknown. More strictly, myths are stylistically definable discourses that express the strong components of semantic systems." (Maranda, 1972, p. 13.)

Maranda's definition has two desirable features: first, it topicalizes myth, making it a living form, and second, the definition emphasizes the intimate connection between myth and social experience. This is a point of such importance that it can bear further elucidation.

It has been postulated by Leach (1964) that the physical and social environment of a child is first perceived as a continuum. Awareness of intrinsically separate things ("trees" versus "bushes", for example, or "mothers" versus "sisters" or "fathers") occurs as the child is taught to impose upon his environment "a kind of discriminating grid", which is language. Things are given labels, names. For such labelling to be successful, the basic discriminations should be clear-cut and unambiguous. Reality, however, presents inconvenient examples of phenomena which resist classification. What are we to do in such a case? Rather than altering linguistic categories to fit experience, Leach shows that in many (perhaps most) instances we instead suppress our awareness (or at least public recognition) of those parts of reality that do not fit the a priori categories.

The reason should be clear. Society invests heavily in its semantic categories. For example, rights to ownership and inheritance of property in our society until quite recently turned on definitions of sex. Traditionally, even in our grandparents' time, the distinction between male and female was made to seem quite clear, and was far-reaching in its implications: the continuum had been dichotomized, whatever variety nature in fact provided. Those who failed to match the categories were identified (and often felt themselves to be) "deviants" (homosexuals, transvestites or simply "effeminate" men and "masculine" women) or "freaks" (the "bearded woman"). Thus, Leach argues, the concept of taboo (things one must not do or even talk about) underlies our semantic categories, which in turn underlie our social structures. Since

definitions of such ideas as "man", "woman", "son", "daughter", "father", "mother", etc. must specify not only what they are but also what they do, story-telling is the appropriate mode to explore the logic of semantic category systems, of which the above example are representative terms. We are all too prone, within the pragmatic philosophical tradition of North America, to ignore the logical implications that flow from changes in behaviour. We live in a society where behaviour untypical of men and women a generation or two ago is now generally accepted; we are in the process of redefining our semantic rules, and thus are in the grips of a logical problem, accompanying a behavioural shift.

Maranda's definition of myth has two parts. Because a myth is a story, it is a coherent set of sentences or in other words a discourse, whose formal properties Propp had already begun to study. But myth is also a representation of an action; the roles it portrays exemplify semantic categories (father, mother, son, husband, wife, gods, men, etc.) that are important to society; myth does indeed express the "strong components of semantic systems". A word of caution is in order here: one should not be led by the above to expect a one-to-one relationship between characters in the story and semantic categories; Levi-Strauss has amply demonstrated the importance of characters who straddle semantic categories. An example is provided in his 1955 article. In the mythology of the Plains Indians of America, themes of life-death, and agriculture-hunting-warfare are of great importance. Obviously, life is to agriculture as death is to warfare, with hunting in an intermediary position. The Indians, following the same logical pattern, distinguish between herbivorous animals, who follow an "agricultural" mode of life, and beasts of prey, who hunt for

their living. In this neatly symmetrical system, one category of animal cannot be easily categorized: the carrion-eating animals (raven, coyote, vulture) who are neither herbivorous, nor do they hunt, in the ordinary sense of stalking and killing prey. By no accident, these animals are the "tricksters" of Indian mythology. In another context, we have already seen that Oedipus exemplifies such ambiguities: for example, since he married his mother, he is, symbolically, his own father. The action of myth turns around such ambiguities. Given the preoccupations of our time, we might expect modern-day myth to portray criminals who are not criminal, women who behave like men, and all the other combinations which express the anxieties that most plague us.

It is to this question that we now turn.

### Why study television as myth?

#### The persistence of myth

Maranda, in the article cited above, has this to say about the survival of mythic modes of thought in our society:

"Myths, in our complex societies, are manifested in idioms different from those in which they were expressed in the past and in which they are still expressed in traditional societies...The triumph of the small but clever one over the clumsy giant may be narrated by an elder in a remote European hamlet in the form of a folktale or it can be found on television and cinema screens, not to mention comic strips. It is also repeated in wide-circulation magazines and newspapers in the North American advertisements of Volkswagen cars...It makes little



difference, still in technological societies, that the metamorphosis of a 'beast' into a handsome male, who will conquer the glamorous princess in the Eden of ads, be the work of a tradition-consolidated magical agent or of mass-media established brands of deodorants or mouthwashes...Technology convinces us that it can achieve what our forefathers thought magic would do. The syntagmatic chains that moulded, and lived through, our ancestors, still perpetuate among us... And our paradigmatic sets are also consistently traditional: variations in contents erode semantic grooves very little, for the functions that direct the flow of imagery are as deeply seated as our conceptual habits ...Our myths...still thrive among us." (Maranda, 1972, pp. 16-17.)

If Maranda is correct in thinking that modern media of communication do no more than commute established mythic patterns, while providing abundant surface variety in conformity with the modes of the time, then we may ask "Why not study the media as transmitters of myth?" Surely it makes sense to ask how we, with our "shared semantic systems", "understand each other" and "cope with the unknown". If Levi-Strauss is correct in believing that analysis of the mythic message will make it yield up its meaning, and if the meaning is a clue to the profound contradictions within the society, then surely the analysis of myth should teach us something about the significance of violence in our common living space, where violence is a metaphor for irreconcilable oppositions within our semantic systems.



Sixguns and Society: myth in the Western

There have been relatively few mythological analyses of mass media productions, particularly in North America. One exception will now be considered in some detail, since it serves to set the stage for some of our later analyses and since it illustrates what we might learn by studying television as myth. The work in question is that of Will Wright (1975), who has recently published a book entitled Sixguns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western. While his book is about movies, much of what he says applies just as well to television.

Wright has reviewed some forty years of Western films. He finds first that it is possible, as Propp asserted, to isolate functions which are constant across films within a genre. However, his work leads Wright to conclude that there has been an evolution in plot structure over the years. He identifies four major categories of film, classified by similarities in plot line: the classical plot, the vengeance plot (which may also be thought of as a variation of the classical), the transition plot, and the professional plot.

Wright argues that changes in plot structure of Westerns are accompanied by changing subject-matter preoccupations or themes: the meaning of the Western, as a genre, has subtly begun to alter over the years. Finally, Wright links up such changes to transformations in American society, and ultimately to ideological changes within the society.

According to Wright, the typical plot of the classical Western can be summarized roughly as follows: A stranger rides into a small community. It turns out that the stranger is exceptionally skilled at gunfighting, and the community accords him the respect due a superior talent, but does not completely accept him as one of its own. At this time, there is a conflict of interests between a villain or villains and the community. The community is menaced because it is not strong enough to stand up to the villains. The stranger keeps his distance, until a friend of his is endangered, whereupon he enters the fray, defeats the villains, and is accepted by the community. The community is safe, and the stranger, now a member of the community, turns his back on his previous life.

This plot, in one form or another, turns up in Wells Fargo, Union Pacific, Cimarron, Dodge City, The Plainsman, Destry Rides Again, Duel in the Sun, Whispering Smith, Shane, Bend of the River, Yellow Sky, The Far Country, Hombre, etc.

#### The meaning of the "classical" Western

Underlying these story elements, Wright perceives certain recurring relationships.

"Perhaps the most important opposition is that separating the hero from the society, the opposition between those who are outside society and those who are inside society." (Wright, 1975, p. 49).

We might (following Greimas) represent this opposition as follows:

$$\frac{\text{hero}}{\text{society}} \approx \frac{\text{outside}}{\text{inside}}$$

which we read as follows: "the hero (the stranger) stands in relation to the society in the same relationship as outside stands to inside (or excluded to included)".

With respect to the outside/inside dimension, the position of the villains is anomalous: sometimes they are seen to be respectable members of society at the beginning of the story, sometimes not.

Other contrasts are the following:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \frac{\text{villains}}{\text{hero/society}} & \approx & \frac{\text{bad}}{\text{good}} \\ \frac{\text{society}}{\text{villains/hero}} & \approx & \frac{\text{weak}}{\text{strong}} \\ \frac{\text{hero}}{\text{society/villains}} & \approx & \frac{\text{wilderness}}{\text{civilization}} \end{array}$$

The meaning of the first two of these contrast patterns is self-evident; the third requires a word of explanation. The association of the hero-stranger with the wilderness is often established visually: for example he wears clothes appropriate to a trapper or Indian scout, in contrast to the more conventional dress of others around him, or he is often framed against a background of mountains, or other savage scenery, in contrast to other characters in the story. Civilization is equated with concern for money, for property, for tools and other products of American culture. In its extreme form, the wilderness/civilization

distinction is transmuted into an East/West contrast, with the West being equated with pure noble wilderness, and the East with education, culture, with weakness, cowardice, selfishness and arrogance. The efforts of settlers to build a civilized community (with schools, churches, respect for law and order), unmarred by the corruption of the effete East, take on their meaning when viewed in the light of the wilderness/civilization distinction, as we now see.

Wright draws a parallel between this system of contrasts and certain themes of social and political significance to American society. According to Wright, the concept of a market economy to which most Americans subscribe is underlaid by a more basic idea of how the individual relates to his society, which Canadian political scientist C. B. MacPherson has termed the theory of "possessive individualism", (MacPherson, 1962). The assumption of this theory is that what makes man human is freedom from dependence on the wills of others, reliance on relationships based on enlightened self-interest, and a belief in the proprietorship of one's own person, for which one owes nothing to society (MacPherson, p. 263; Wright, p. 136). "But," observes Wright, "a society that accepts this idea of the individual and the group is not one likely to create pleasant, satisfying social relationships" (Wright, p. 137). The attitudes appropriate to possessive individualism are incompatible with the needs of human society: what makes man human is also what makes him inhuman. This is the basic paradox of modern Western liberalism. "Valuable human experience, it seems, depends on open, trusting communication based on shared social needs, goals, and interests; it is in this context that the natural rewards of family, love, work, community are enjoyed. But the

market demands that members of society identify themselves as individuals who are directed by self-interest and characterized by independence and self-sufficiency" (Wright, p. 137). The Western, interpreted as a mythic form of communication, asks the question "how can we maintain our independence, and still be part of society?".

It is in this context, Wright argues, that the inside/outside society found in the Western is to be understood.

The good/bad contrast discriminates between people who are concerned only with themselves and those who are concerned with others. The strong/weak contrast connotes independence of the will of others, proprietorship of one's own person (unlike the other members of the community who have family, business, professional ties that limit their action).

Thus the meaning of the Western becomes clear: society depends on strong individuals, but independence and strength can be disinterested as well as greedy and opportunistic, and indeed disinterested strength is able to prevail over interested strength. Finally, the entry of the stranger into the community at the conclusion of the story says that individualism and a sense of community can be reconciled, but only at a price: the hero must sacrifice some of his independence. Finally the strength of society comes in reconciling the values of the wilderness with those of civilization.



## The evolution of the Western

Over the years, both the society and the Western have changed. The typical contemporary Western employs a quite different plot, built around a theme related to professional concerns.

In such a story, there are a group of heroes who undertake a job for pay. The society around them is typically ineffective, venal, absurd, and incapable of defending itself. The job involves the heroes in a fight with a set of villains, who are very strong, and often quite admirable. The heroes are all especially endowed with particular individual talents. As a group they share respect, affection, and loyalty, and are independent of society in all ways. There is a fight, the villains are defeated, and at the conclusion the heroes either stay or die together.

The genre includes Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, True Grit, The Wild Bunch, The Professionals, Rio Bravo, etc.

What has changed here from the classical plot is the relation of the hero(es) to the society: the heroes are not attracted to society, do not depend on it, and indeed society, in the sense of community found in the earlier plots, hardly plays an important role at all in these films. Furthermore members of society tend to be characterized as nasty, unkind, unpleasant, cruel, vicious, mean, stingy, conniving, petty, dull, intolerant and foolish. The heroes, and often the villains as well, are nice and kind. Thus one of the earlier equivalences has now been reversed:

<u>heroes</u>	≈	<u>good</u>
society		bad



And a new relationship has appeared:

<u>small group</u>	$\approx$	<u>companionship, understanding, loyalty, sacrifice</u>
large group		money, business, trade, selfishness, conformity

Wright perceives in this change of pattern evidence of a "cultural change reflecting changes in the social institutions which shape attitudes and actions" (Wright, p. 173). Underlying the transformation, according to Wright, is a transition from a market to a managed economy, and the increasing acceptance in America of the role of a professional elite. He sees a de-emphasis of the role of the individualistic, aggressive businessman in favour of the bureaucrat, the technocrat, the tightly knit political team of varied talents. Finally the transformation supposes a turning away from loyalty to the macro-society, and an intensification of loyalty to the micro-society. The professional Western is, asserts Wright, the "carrier" of a "new ideology", exemplified by the behaviour of people in large corporations, and by the Nixon team during the Watergate years.

#### The transition to television

If I have taken some time to present Wright's ideas, it is not because I am in agreement with them on all points, but because I believe his analysis illustrates well the potential of the mythologistic approach. In many respects, the crime drama, which is the main focus of this present study, is a continuation of the Western (and has indeed supplanted the Western on television) in the new forum of television. Several of the themes described by Wright reappear in the present analysis. More

importantly, Wright's pioneering work should provide an impetus for a reconsideration of the role of television drama, and a fresh interest in the multiple levels of meaning which such forms of expression are capable of conveying. Not all of the meaning of a myth is transmitted by its surface structure; we must also take account of deep structures.<sup>5</sup>

### What does mythic analysis tell us about the role of violence?

#### Theories of violence and the mass media

There are, I believe, three basic (but not necessarily mutually exclusive) ways we may approach the question of violence in the mass media, which correspond to three theories of how we as viewers understand the depiction or description of violent acts. Let us call these three theories modelling theory, catharsis theory, and structuralist theory.<sup>6</sup>

#### Modelling theory

Modelling theory says in effect that what one perceives, one will imitate. If one spends much time watching acts of aggression, one will engage in acts of aggression. (Or, as Gerbner has recently proposed, if one watches victim behaviour, one is prepared to respond as a victim.)

Although it has inspired extensive experimentation, there has emerged less than unambiguous support for the theory. Thus, for example, it was shown in one set of experiments that displays of aggressive behaviour on film were correlated with the tendency of subjects to administer shocks to anonymous "victims". However, subsequent research showed that similar aggressive behaviour could be elicited by use of films which were arousing, but which did not portray aggressive acts.

It has also been shown that watching much television results in an increase of aggressive behaviour in the playground, but again it is not clear whether the increase is an effect of the violent content of television, or some more general overall effect produced by watching too much television, regardless of what appears on it.

Thus, while it is probable that there exist modelling effects related to the surface content of television, it now seems clear that the relationship is more complex than might have initially been supposed.

### Catharsis theory

According to the catharsis theory of the function of portrayed violence, the individual is able to reduce impulses to aggressive behaviour by substituting a vicarious experience provided by theatre. In this view, the portrayal of violence may actually have a therapeutic effect, allowing the individual to express by substitution many of his anti-social emotions. His latent feelings of aggression and violence can be safely "acted out" in the context of the play, thus "draining" the viewer of dangerous anti-social tendencies. This view of the role of portrayed violence, while often said to date back to the dramatic theory of the Greeks, lacks at present, strong experimental support evidence for the theory and is even more tenuous than that supporting a modelling theory.

### Structuralist theory

Structuralist theory is not necessarily inconsistent with either of the preceding views, but attacks the problem at a different level. Modelling theory asks how people behave and how they learn to behave by

imitation; it does not by and large enquire much into how people interpret what they see or do, or how they fit social behaviour into any kind of meaning system. Structuralist theory does not deny that individuals can learn behaviour patterns by watching; it argues that many of the most important effects of television cannot be evaluated by a simple correlation between what happens on the screen and what viewers do immediately afterwards. Catharsis theory accords a larger place to the role of emotional arousal, and its regulation: it assumes that overt aggressive behaviour may mirror profound feelings of anxiety, anger, hostility, etc. Because of the phenomenon of viewer identification with the protagonist of the story, the portrayal of violent action on the screen is likely to arouse latent feelings, which may, depending on one's theoretical orientation, either find expression in the action of the play (and thus the story may in fact obviate the need for overt acting-out), or may actually stimulate anti-social behaviour.<sup>7</sup>

Structuralist theory of the role of violence attributes to myth both a surface structure and a deep structure. It sees the events of television crime drama as being both ostensibly realistic representations of ordinary life and also a code for deeper meanings. It sees myth as having a logical function, in that it attempts to reconcile contradictory principles inherent in the semantic systems of a society: it follows that surface expressions of violence are a way of exploring deep structural irreconcilables. It is a cognitive-based theory.

The shift of relative emphasis from surface to deep structure leads to a rephrasing of the question of gratuitous violence. The issue may be simply stated: When is enough enough?

Television has frequently been criticized on the grounds that it takes an admitted element of real life, the presence of violence and crime, and blows it up out of its real proportions, since the majority of folk probably go through life without ever having witnessed a murder, or participated in a crime, except vicariously on TV, where, on the contrary, they can, on a good night, manage to witness about twenty murders (and assorted mayhem) by judicious fiddling with the dial. The net result of this horrendous over-portrayal of a sordid but statistically rare side of life, it is sometimes asserted, is to heighten the anxiety of the whole viewing population.

I have no evidence on the point, although I am aware of the careful research undertaken by the group at the Annenberg School in the United States, and am certainly prepared to give a large measure of credence to their results. I want to take issue only with the assumption that the function of TV crime drama is to portray realistically the events of everyday life. It is my belief, instead, that crime drama is primarily a means for the conveyance of ideological values. Within this framework, violence is an intrinsic dramatic element: in Turner's (1969) phrase: "Traditional narrative genres such as myth, tale, and legend typically begin with an action or event that violates or mediates the structure of the prevailing order, giving rise to a situation in which actors and elements stand in ambiguous or contradictory relationships to each other.



The 'plot' or narrative sequence proceeds from this point through a series of permutations of the relations between these actors and elements toward a final state of equilibrium in which all elements again stand in unambiguous...relations to each other." The accuracy of this statement, with respect to crime drama, will become abundantly clear.

It is possible that the makers of crime drama could reduce the unfortunate side effects associated with the crime drama form, to the extent these are socially dysfunctional, by considerably de-emphasizing its documentary aspects; this would probably be more helpful than attempting to wish out of existence a form of story-telling whose lineaments are ancient and whose distribution across societies appears to be very nearly universal.

While I wish in no way to deny that surface-structure meanings are important in their own right, I believe the issue of logical levels has been too little emphasized. A structuralist theory explains at least one fact which is otherwise difficult to account for: this is the well-known finding that, at quite early ages, most children are perfectly able to discriminate between fact and fiction.

Without a theory which supposes a deep structural level of mythic communication, it seems to me that we would be at a loss to explain why some of the most effective theatre, such as Stratford, depends so little on surface realism. Often the mayhem on television is highly stylized, and quite remote from the brute reality of violent death. This does not necessarily make it dramatically less effective. Children at an early age learn that to say "bang, you're dead" is a symbolic, not a real, act of violence.



If we accept such a two-level theory of mythic communication, we should have a more differentiated theory, which would allow us to predict that every person is likely to respond to surface meanings (the personality of the actor, the excitement of the action, the filmic techniques) to some degree, which will vary from show to show, and person to person. Most people will also respond to the deep meanings, even though the logical processes involved might not always be verbalizable. After all, people speak and understand language, even when they are not consciously aware of all the mechanisms involved.

It is even possible that violent TV crime drama has its quota of pro-social effects. As Turner (1969) states: "The point is that narratives constitute...a sort of psychological play, enabling a listener who understands the rules of the game to gain greater familiarity with, and control over, his subjective tensions through the vicarious manipulation of them that 'playing the game' (projection of them into the story) makes possible." (p. 66).

This version of catharsis theory, which posits a relation between ideas and emotions, has never to my knowledge been explored empirically.

#### A note on methodology

The focus of this research report is on meanings in television crime drama. Yet I hope that the preceding discussion has made it clear that I make no pretension to reveal the meaning of a show.

For one thing, we postulate that meaning is conveyed at more than one level. Barbara Leonard, of the Commission's staff, has done an interesting study of an episode of Kojak, which also figures in the present study. Among other things, she finds that this episode conveys some very definite (and regressive) attitudes about the role of women in society. This question is not so much ignored as treated differently in my own analysis. This is not because I think Miss Leonard wrong; in point of fact, I think the arguments she makes are cogent and well-documented. It is simply that she is attacking the meaning of the episode at a slightly different level from myself.

Secondly, it would be premature to claim too much for a method which has only come into general application within the very recent past, and which remains to be tested in the crucible of scientific criticism and use. In this report, I hope to illustrate the potential relevance of a methodology which I am convinced will revolutionize the field of mass media content analysis. For the moment however, I can only aspire to show that the meanings of television can be much more complex and multi-faceted than had been previously imagined.

In adopting this course, I may seem less than usually preoccupied with normal content analytic canons of objectivity and reliability. Krippendorff (1969), in a very important article, has classed content analysis approaches as belonging to one of three models, an association model, a discourse model, and a communication model. Canons of objectivity and reliability are most easily fulfilled for association models of analysis, but the problem with such models, which are illustrated by the vast majority of actual empirical work in the field, is that they often lead to trivial conclusions.

I would like to consider that the present study is an attempt to apply what Krippendorff calls a "discourse" model.<sup>8</sup> The advantage of such an approach is that the conclusions we may arrive at need not be trivial; the disadvantage is that such conclusions are inevitably more controversial.

In emphasizing the risks of an enterprise of this kind, I want only to make it clear that what follows is an exploration of some new avenues of research.

I am motivated by the sense that the eventual reward will more than justify the risks.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Generative-transformational grammars were first proposed by Chomsky (1957). Chomsky's idea is that grammars of ordinary language may be thought of as having two kinds of rules: generative (or "re-write") rules whose application results in a set of what was originally termed "kernel" sentences (roughly equivalent to simple declarative sentences), which together form the deep structure of language; transformational rules operate on kernel sentences to change word order, insert and delete elements, introduce tense markers, produce questions and commands, etc. At the deep structural level of language, it is apparent that there are a limited number of basic sentence structures, and that it is by the insertion of lexical material that variety of meaning is attained. Thus deep structural representations exemplify better than surface representations the basic logical pattern and meaning of a sentence.

Chomsky's theory permits us to see the potential role that pre-conscious processes play in producing and understanding language.

2. Levi-Strauss collaborated at one period with the great European linguist, Roman Jakobson (from whom he seems to have first heard of Propp's work). Jakobson's seminal work on phonetics had a profound effect on Levi-Strauss' conceptualization of the nature and role of meaning in myth. In this the latter was not alone: application of the "distinctive features" theory of language categories has spawned a whole field of study called "cognitive anthropology" (Tyler, 1969), whose central goal is to isolate basic components of meaning underlying the wealth of surface meanings of ordinary language.

3. To get a "feel" for the principles involved, the reader is invited to compare, for each of the three triplets in the example (f,b,p), (th,d,t), (h,g,k), the changes in position of the muscles which are used to produce speech. Note that the same pattern emerges in all three cases. Such below-the-surface regularities need not be perceived consciously in order to play an important role in our ability to understand speech; Levi-Strauss' argument is that our perception of meaning is based on similar unconscious mechanisms.

4. But not always: for example, the Chinese prize "thousand-year-old" eggs; in our society, some individuals, but by no means all, love the "rotteness" of cheeses such as Limberger.

5. See Footnote #1 for discussion of surface and deep structure.

6. With respect to all these theories there is one unresolved question, often begged, that concerns the extent to which there does in fact exist a correlation between the depiction or description of violence in the story-telling of a society, and the actual level of violence in that society. Certainly violence, rape, murder, incest, treachery are universal elements of myth, even in the most peaceable of societies. Lessa (1966), for example, who has collected folklore in the South Pacific, notes that "physical aggression, including battles, murders and cannibalism, constitutes a noticeable ingredient of Ulithian folklore" even though today, as a people, they are "most gentle". Lessa is left to speculate on the possibility of cultural diffusion or borrowing, or of a "kind of outlet for repressions" (Maranda, 1972, p. 90). Neither is a satisfactory explanation: the "borrowing" hypothesis is a way of avoiding the question; the "outlet" theory is merely a variant of the catharsis model.

7. The original Greek sense of catharsis, in Aristotle for example, included a notion of a tragic fate. Not all modern psychological theories of catharsis take account of the tragic elements which in fact can better be explained within a structuralist framework. Again the emphasis in the psychological approach is on surface behaviour, correlated with emotional response patterns.

8. An extended discussion of the question of what are termed supra-sentential or trans-phrastic discourse analysis can be found in Chabrol (1973).

## SECTION II

THE NARRATIVE FUNCTION OF VIOLENCE:

VARIATIONS ON A THEME



## Introduction

The primary objective of this section is, by comparative analysis of four crime drama episodes, to show how one basic plot situation can be translated into quite different realizations, with radically altered meanings.

A secondary objective is to illustrate the use of a research tool.

The procedure to be employed is to consider each of four different episodes separately, and then to bring out comparisons between the four. A plot summary of each episode is provided, and this is followed by an analytic section.

The four dramas are, respectively, Hawaii Five-O ("Honor is an Unmarked Grave"), Kojak ("Life, Liberation, and the Pursuit of Death"), Police Story ("The Wyatt Earp Syndrome"), and Adam-12 (title not recorded).

Hawaii Five-O

"Honor is an Unmarked Grave"

Broadcast on CBS, May 20, 1976, at 9:00 p.m.

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Résumé of Episode

1. The program begins with a standard teaser: a series of quick shots of the Honolulu cityscape, intercut with shots of police action and introduction of the main characters, all accompanied by exciting music.
2. The story proper opens with a scene showing several men digging, watched by someone whose legs, dressed in white slacks, we see pacing back and forth as he watches the diggers. Suddenly he calls out "Hold it, gentlemen" to the workers, and we see his body in full for the first time as he advances to examine their "treasure". Throughout this scene music and variety of shots are used to create an air of suspense. A minute later the watcher, Travis Marshall, is seen giving an interview to reporters. It is revealed that he has discovered a body that is related to an unsolved crime. "I knew it was here", he says, also revealing that it is something of a vocation of his to solve crimes which have puzzled the police. He is revealed to have a national reputation because of books he has written on the subject of previous discoveries. The general impression of Marshall is negative,

conveyed by his arrogant, boasting way of talking, his effete manners (suggested by accent and non-verbal facial expressions), plus his evident aggressiveness: "The police bungled the whole thing".

3. The action shifts to the home of a very aristocratic lady (an impression conveyed by the dress and bearing of the lady, the presence of servants, the setting of the action within a large private garden). It is revealed that the body was that of Agatha Henderson's grandson, Brian, who had been thought to have disappeared years ago. Marshall lays out the situation to Mrs. Henderson, notes that he is continuing his investigations, again makes allusion to his national reputation as an investigator, and suggests that she may have some interest in knowing the results of his investigation in advance of any revelations to the public. She agrees that the Henderson estate will employ his services at the rate of \$300 per day. This whole scene is observed secretly by Mrs. Henderson's servant Kono.

4. The scene shifts to the police station, where McGarrit and his crew are observed viewing snapshots of Brian Henderson. It is revealed that he was a wild youth: the term "childish pranks" is used ironically. His family was one of the best in Hawaii: his grandfather Thomas was of "old missionary stock". Brian was a disappointment to them: when last seen he was

attending a party at the home of Carol Chung, "the hottest thing in town". The question is asked: "How come Travis Marshall knew where the body was planted?" The police exit saying "Let's not wait to see it on TV".

5. The scene occurs in Travis Marshall's apartment, which is modern and ostentatiously luxurious (contrasting with the austerity of the police office, and the simple elegance of the home of the aristocrat). As McGarrit enters, Marshall drops a cat he has been fondling: "Cat hair gets over everything; I'll have to get rid of her". Marshall's attitude to the police is one of sardonic mock respect: when asked how he came to have information concerning the place the body is buried, he replies: "An anonymous phone-caller, would you believe it?", but his tone of voice suggests veiled aggressiveness. A somewhat angry confrontation follows, in which McGarrit warns him not to push his luck by interfering with due process, or hiding information from the police: "So many good books have been written in prison!"

6. The next action takes place in police cars and offices: we are informed that the body has been positively identified as that of Brian Henderson. There was a "nice clean hole in the skull". The police surgeon adds details concerning the size of the hole, the probable angle from which it was shot, etc. Plans are made: McGarrit is to interview Mrs. Henderson;

his assistants, Williams and Chin Ho inspect the grave site. A permanent "tail" is to be put on Marshall.

7. The interview between Mrs. Henderson and McGarrit occurs on the patio of her beautiful home. She comments somewhat tartly on the failure of the police to locate her missing grandson. McGarrit, whose attitude throughout his exchange with Mrs. Henderson expresses great respect, admits: "I guess we fail sometimes". He then tells her that Brian had been murdered, to which she expresses surprise. He asks her if she can add anything, to which she demurs: "It's all on the record; the subject is still very painful for me". She then dismisses McGarrit with a curt "Will that be all?", a remark he accepts graciously.

8. Two brief scenes. In the first, Mrs. Henderson is seen talking to the servant who had spied on her and Marshall. We cannot hear what they say and are left to suspect collusion of some kind.

9. Another old servant of Mrs. Henderson, Koji, is observed at the graveyard by Williams and Chin Ho.

10. Mrs. Henderson, is chauffeured in her limousine by Kono, down the great tree-covered hill from her home to a small house where a child, Kimo, is observed playing with a toy



helicopter. Mrs. Henderson greets him affectionately and demands to know if his "mother, Maru" is at home. Before she can enter, a surly looking individual appears, and watches with apparent hostility as Mrs. Henderson passes through. "Paul is an angry man", comments Mrs. Henderson. The child asks whether she has seen his father. Mrs. Henderson and Maru greet each other warmly. In the course of the conversation. Mrs. Henderson asks Maru whether Paul, her husband, knows who Kimo's father was. Maru believes not. Mrs. Henderson requests Maru not to lie to the police, but also not to volunteer information. Maru says "I love you", and the two women express emotion indicating great affection.

11. The police begin to wonder how much Koji (the old servant) knows, since he comes to pay his respects to an unmarked grave. Chin is assigned the task of talking to him "in the ancient manner".

12. Marshall, by a clever manoeuvre, succeeds in slipping his tail, and reaches a rendez-vous with Paul (obviously his "anonymous" information source). "Paul," he says, "You're gonna make yourself a bundle". Paul gives him photographs. There is discussion of Maru's first marriage and annulment to George Fowler, the absent father mentioned by the boy, Kimo. As he looks at the pictures, Marshall says excitedly: "It's all coming clear, there never was a 'George Fowler'", and



comparing two photos: "He was the father of him--and somewhere that was a reason for murder!"

13. Chin arrives at Mrs. Henderson's to discover that the old man Koji is dead, and that the funeral service is in progress. Questions are posed: There seems to have been an "awful hurry to have the body cremated"? Why did his daughter Maru not attend "her daddy's funeral"?

14. Marshall returns to see Mrs. Henderson. He notes that Koji paid his respects to an unmarked grave: hence Koji knew where Brian was buried. Maru was four months pregnant at the time Brian disappeared. "What are you getting at?" asks Mrs. Henderson. The marriage of his sole heir, insinuates Marshall, to a 25-year old servant girl could not have made her husband very happy (spoken in a sneering tone of voice). Maru had obviously been "paid off", and a "disappearance" arranged for Brian. He then suggests a financial arrangement between himself and the Henderson estate which would "buy some silence". He notes that the story would make a "racy book"; it's a "messy business"; the book would "bring a bundle". Mrs. Henderson, who has seemed to accede to the blackmail attempt, sits down to write out a cheque. "The date", she asks. "The 10th of October", he replies. She then passes him a cheque, which brings a look of astonishment to his face. It is for \$96, the remainder of what remains in order to terminate their actual

He makes it clear that he knows that she is the guilty party. "Is that an accusation?" she says, "Should I call my lawyer?" She puts in the call. The two make jokes together about ESP, in a friendly manner. When McGarrit leaves, he turns for a minute and says "Sorry."

### Hawaii Five-O: An interpretation

Let us first consider the event which motivates the whole plot development of the particular episode of Hawaii Five-O which we are analyzing. Recall the form of the "culinary triangle". In the present instance, the theme is sex. It is possible to think of sex as "raw": untransformed, neither ennobling nor degrading in and of itself, an epiphenomenon of the genetic constitution of man. Most societies, however, give a great deal of value to the form which sex takes when it is "consumed" within socially structured contexts. Within our society, at least until quite recently, and I think still, the socially-approved context of sex is exogamous marriage. The "rotten" form of sex is incest (a taboo which is shared by the great majority of human societies). Yet strictly speaking, incest is the most "natural" form of sexual intercourse since, in the absence of taboos, it is between members of the same family that the greatest opportunity for spontaneous coupling occurs. What is most natural, on one level, that of the brute, becomes most unnatural, on the level of the civilized human being.

The sexual triangle then becomes:

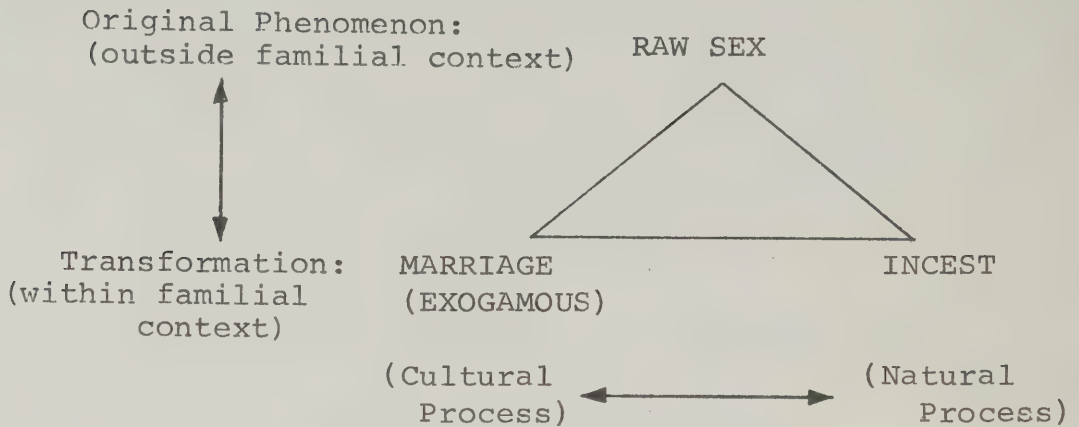


Figure 3: The Sexual Triangle

It is revealed in the story that young Brian had been sowing his wild oats through activities which did not please his grandparents, but which were not sufficient to justify a confrontation. In particular, by the reference to Carol Chung, "the hottest thing in town", it is made clear that he had been indulging in raw sex. The act which is unacceptable is his "rape" of Maru. This act sets up an intolerable contradiction, because it is clear that (1) Grandfather Thomas stands for social refinement (he is an aristocrat, "of old missionary stock", and everything points to an invincible moral rectitude and sense of social responsibility); (2) Brian's act stands for incest, the antithesis of refined or "correct" sexual behavior. The fact that it is incest can be inferred indirectly: so strong is the prohibition against incest in our society that it seldom appears directly as a dramatic

theme, certainly in television, without being appropriately veiled. In the present case it can be inferred from the following facts:

- a) Maru and Brian occupy the same dwelling, as do typically brother and sister;
- b) Maru's father Koji is described by the grandmother (in immediate contiguity to her revelation of the rape) as "being like a father to Brian" (his own parents having died in an accident);
- c) Maru is treated by grandmother Agatha in terms appropriate to a mother-daughter relationship;
- d) Brian is mourned in the Japanese tradition by Koji, the father of Maru, like a son;
- e) On internal evidence, the rage of grandfather Thomas is to be understood as a moral rage, unrelated to his concern for social prestige (a point which the shyster lawyer Marshall is portrayed as having missed, since he cannot understand actions which are not motivated by considerations of personal gain).

The "rotten" act of Brian (called "rape" by grandmother Agatha, rather than incest, although she herself adds the information that Maru seems to have been the instigator) must be punished, because it threatens the basis of society. Punishment, or retribution, has a raw form and two elaborated forms as well, one

involving spontaneous, unchecked "natural" processes, the other involving controlled, refined, socially-approved legal processes (namely a trial). Grandfather Thomas cannot bring himself to the point of involving outside mediation and instead performs a raw act of retribution, killing his grandson. His crime of murder of a son (or grandson) must then be hidden, again emphasizing the close relationship of the Henderson family, at least in their own minds, to the maintenance of social order, since to have the Hendersons brought to trial for a crime as fundamental as incest or family murder would again threaten to undermine the social order.

Grandfather Thomas' act has eliminated one intolerable contradiction, but has replaced it by another. His act of raw retribution is itself an offense against the social code, and further takes the form of a crime of murder against a member of one's own family (to all intents and purposes against his own son, since he stands in the stead of the absent real father). His act must also be punished, before order can be seen to have been restored, otherwise the very quintessence of social order, represented by the Hendersons, will appear to be rotten at the core.

None of the acts of sacrifice which then follow are sufficient to remove the contradiction:

a) The grandfather dies from natural causes (but without having atoned for his crime);



- b) The grave of Brian is secretly tended by Koji;
- c) The girl Maru is protected, and the issue of the illicit union is provided with a fictional father, and a real step-father, as well as a comfortable home.

As the television story opens, the crime remains unpunished. The purpose of the story must be to correct this basic disequilibrium, and to show how such seeming basic contradictions may be mediated without destruction of the social fabric.

The story is concerned with two attempts at mediation: one involving a false mediator, one involving a true mediator. The false mediator (who significantly enough is a lawyer, and is called "Counsellor", even if his true role turns out to be that of a journalist) is the first to discover the hidden crime. The mediation which he proposes is trial by publicity (books, press conferences, television interviews, etc.). This is indeed retribution, but in punishing the crime, the social order will itself be destroyed. As Travis Marshall himself states to Mrs. Henderson, it will be a "messy business". It does not make sense to punish a crime against the social order by destroying the social order itself. So the mediation offered by Marshall must be rejected, and is done so by Mrs. Henderson, who kills him. In so doing, it turns out that her act exactly parallels that of her husband: she commits an act of private



retribution against someone who has performed a "rotten" act. Unlike him, however, the taboo on killing a member of one's own family is not involved, and the character of Marshall has been set up in such a way that Mrs. Henderson's act is made to appear almost an act of justifiable self-defense.

It may be asked why is Marshall's act "rotten"? In fact, I believe that the difference is in the concept of how public opinion is to be mobilized in order to judge a crime. Within the judicial process, a representative sample of citizens is selected; those with obvious biases are eliminated; evidence is presented to them in an even-handed way; strict rules are followed as to what kind of evidence may or may not be introduced. Trial by the press leaves the judgment to everyone; no control over the kind of evidence to be presented is imposed, nor on the form in which the evidence is presented, and so on. One is a refined process; one is an uncontrolled, spontaneous, unchecked process, a "messy business".

So we have a "retribution triangle":

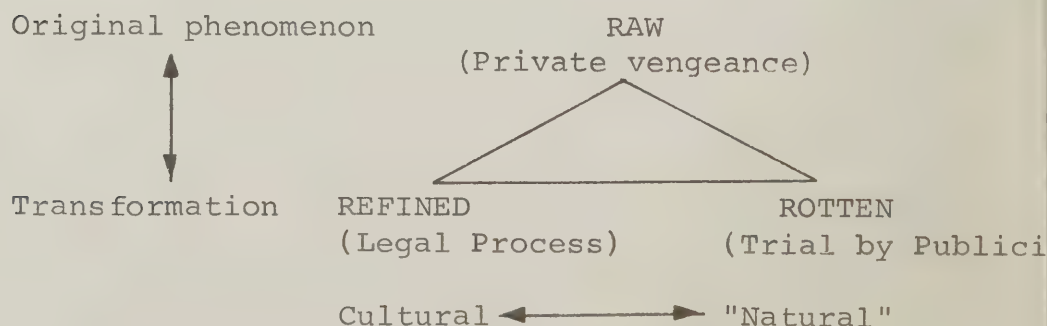


Figure 4: The Retribution Triangle

Furthermore, Marshall's constant preoccupation with money, which motivates his blackmail attempt, is a rotten motive (unchecked greed and self-aggrandisement) as opposed to refined, or socially-responsible self-realizing processes which include consideration for others.<sup>1</sup>

At this point, the true mediator enters (McGarrit), and order is now easily re-established. Grandmother Agatha may be punished, by due legal process (which is the significance of her phoning to her lawyer in the very last scene), and her punishment for the raw retributive act committed against Marshall, may be substituted for the previous crime of her husband, which it echoes. The rule of society is not threatened: by his attitude, McGarrit indicates his respect for Mrs. Henderson, and hence assures the stability of the system. In fact, the final scene conveys an extraordinary sense of serene acceptance of her fate by Mrs. Henderson: she seems almost to have been waiting for the moment.

It may be asked why the necessity for a false mediator in this story? A great deal of comment at the beginning of the

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<sup>1</sup>The theme of money will turn up in relation to other programs, and will be treated more fully there. It might just be noted in passing that Wright (1975) has found that in movies effete, greedy characters are often identified as "Easterners", usually contrasted with more honest, socially-oriented "Westerners". Such is the case in the present episode: Marshall is the prototype of the untrustworthy Easterner.

show is made about the inability of the police to solve the original crime. Since their failure, which they freely, if ruefully, admit, cannot be due to their incompetence, which would contradict the whole premise of the police drama genre, it must be due to a more fundamental cause. The following explanation is offered as a hypothesis, for which I think there exists reasonable evidence.

In my view, I believe the thesis of the show mirrors the post-Watergate anxiety about the tri-partite division of powers in the American political system. As an exercise, let us establish a set of equivalences:

Table 1

The concept of separation of powers in the thematic structure of the Hawaii Five-O episode.

<u>Hawaii Five-O</u>	<u>Political System</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
The Henderson Family (In particular, Agatha)	The Office of the President	The conscience of society: the Institution which most perfectly mirrors the constraints and exigencies of the underlying social order
Travis Marshall	The Congress	The often grubby and essentially commercial interests of America, pursuing goals of private gain, often at the expense of public considerations.
McGarrit and Hawaii Five-O	The Judiciary	The mediator of society: neither the prey of corrupt private interests nor the ultimate body responsible for the social order, but rather the arbiter, and often the court of last resort.

In this conceptualization, the role of the President is primary: it is accorded the greatest veneration, as office, and is accorded the greatest investment in fundamental belief in the stability of the social system, including its continuity with the past.

It is however, common experience that those who exemplify the highest office may not always live up to its demanding role. When their behavior is inappropriate, the society is presented with a dilemma, and it is this dilemma which is the theme of Hawaii Five-0. Because it is the highest office, and incarnates society's highest values, it cannot be judged. This would imply the existence of a higher authority. And yet, the office cannot logically be the author of its own punishment, because as seen in the present episode, to be so merely leads to the compounding of one crime by another: the punishment of incest is achieved at the cost of consanguinal murder.

The puzzle can be resolved by the setting up of a conflict between the forces of society and the forces of nature. The latter are seen to threaten the former's very existence. In this circumstance, the third party can enter as mediator, for by preventing the destruction of society, the mediator can also act as retributor. Thus the episode shows that a logical

solution exists to an apparently unresolvable problem. A rationale is provided by a separation of powers.

I do not mean to suggest that the Hawaii Five-O episode has a conscious didactic role. Nor do I even mean to assert that the program is a metaphor of political equilibrium. Rather what I do mean to indicate is that, in every society, there are certain permanent logical conundrums. For every society, having adopted rules of behavior which conform to the social values of that society (such rules always supposing a constraint on "natural" processes), the riddle is posed as to who is to assure the interpretation for the society of what is, or is not, correct. There must in other words be a highest office, responsible for the setting of standards for the society. But since the holders of such an office are human, and susceptible to error, there must also be a higher than the highest (otherwise breaches of the rules will be unpunished). Yet this latter case is by definition logically impossible, and so each society develops its own answer to this conundrum. For example, the medieval myth of the divine right of kings and popes was a means of answering the riddle, although the assumption of divine origins for both monarchy and church resulted in more or less permanent conflict. Earlier European mythical systems permitted for veritable dei ex machinae, although the issue always remained, if gods could judge men,



who was to judge gods? The division of powers myth is an answer appropriate to a society whose rationale does not include the possibility of intervention by suprahuman powers. What I mean to assert is the existence of a deep mythic structure, which generates the television program and the political system. Thus, one does not explain the other; both are explained by a logical system common to the American experience which underlies both these and other events.



Kojak

"Life, Liberation and the Pursuit of Death"

Broadcast on CTV and CBS, April 4, 1976, 9:00 p.m.

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Résumé of Episode<sup>1</sup>

The regular introduction sets the tone of the show with its quick series of geometric "wipes" which cover different shots of Kojak's face or uncover city-scapes of New York. Included in quick cuts are a long shot of Kojak running and aiming a gun toward the camera, and another of him watching a second man whose fingers tap impatiently in the foreground. Not only the short duration of the shots, but also the movement of the wipes and animation of the title provide a sense of action and excitement.

1. Scene 1 helps build suspense with shots of a dark city skyline, a van pulling up on a dark street and a tilt up to what seems to be the only lighted window in an old apartment building. The opening credits roll over the first few city shots, with eerie, quavering music and a cat mewing in the background.

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<sup>1</sup>This résumé is an abridged version of one prepared by Barbara Leonard.

2.       Scene 2 sets up the conflict. We see Villiano and Nystrom in the latter's apartment, with sirens wailing and rats squeaking in the background. Nystrom nibbles on some food as he checks the window and then calmly announces, "He's here." As he moves toward the door, Villiano, who is sitting teasing a rat in its cage, remarks that they certainly "pushed the right button." The man outside the door shouts, "It's Professor Draper. Open up!", in a way that suggests anger or irritation. He is surprised to find Villiano there, and is even more agitated when Villiano complains that he and Nystrom have been graded unfairly by Draper in their graduate psychology course. Villiano then introduces the name Mark Greene, shows Draper a snapshot of himself and Greene leaving a gay bar. He also announces that he and Nystrom intend to graduate with the best record of any Ph.D's in experimental psychology. Draper is incensed, and accuses them of turning it all into a "vicious game". He angrily denounces the work the two students do with laboratory rats, describing it as "torture" that tests endurance and "limits of the organism". He declares vehemently that giving higher grades would be tantamount to giving a seal of approval for "work I hate". He assures the students that they have the information about him and Greene entirely wrong, and that they are going to pay for it. Villiano then suggests that they will approach Greene's employers at the boys' school where he teaches.

During this exchange, Villiano (in long shot) has cut himself a piece of cheese with a large butcher's knife, and we are suddenly given a close-up of the knife in his hand as he faces Draper again. At the same instant, ominous music begins.

When the threat to Greene is made, Draper lunges at Villiano (medium shot). Although the knife is not shown, we can assume from Draper's pained expression, cry of agony and gradual collapse that he has been stabbed. Draper's cry is mingled with frantic squeakings from the rats.

Nystrom, with surprise, declares him to be dead. Villiano still holds the knife, which does not appear to be bloody. He nervously insists that Draper attacked him, and that it was a matter of self-defence. He outlines a plan to dispose of the body.

This is one of the longest scenes in the show. It establishes the victim, Draper, as an intelligent and emotional man. He admits a possible lack of objectivity in assigning grades, but defends that on the basis of a hatred for unnecessary cruelty. He also leaps to the defence of his friend. He is shown to wince as he recognizes the picture, but otherwise his attitude is one of anger and contempt. Villiano and Nystrom, on the other hand, adopt a cool and sullen stance in making their threat.

3.       Scene 3 shifts the action to the dimly lit docks where an attractive young blond, Lorelei Mason, is staring out across the river. She dejectedly flicks her unfinished cigarette into the river and pulls up her coat collar as the wind whips her scarf about, suggesting discomfort and anticipating a frisson of fear. She turns and sees something which makes her move into the shadow of a high pile of crates and tarpaulins. It is an approaching van which has caught her attention, the white van of Scene 1. The camera cuts between close-ups of her well-lit face and the movement of the van as it backs up to the edge of the pier near the crates.

She moves to a better hiding spot behind the jumbled stack of boxes, and the camera shows her from the opposite side, peering through a small triangle formed by the dark crates. When the van stops, Villiano gets out, opens the back doors and pulls a large, heavy box out onto the ground. He takes the metal rod, smashes the bulb of an overhead light, flings the rod into the river, and dumps the body over the edge. Two shots show the body falling and splashing into the water below. Villiano then tosses in the box. This action is intercut with close-ups of Lorelei who has been watching with horrified fascination. She gasps inaudibly as she sees the body fall, and slumps against the boxes, listening anxiously as the van pulls away.

In this scene, the pier is made to appear inhospitable--deserted, cold, windy and dark. Lorelei's moving in and out of the shadows and hiding behind the dark triangle add to the suspense and sinister atmosphere. The shattering of the light bulb breaks the silence and increases the gloom. Tension also mounts because Lorelei's fear of being discovered changes from a simple precaution, to a terrified realization that she has witnessed the disposal of a murder victim. The scene ends with a pull focus which reduces her face to a blur. Slow, minor-key music adds to the tense atmosphere.

4. Scene 4 begins with the stark contrast of a bright sunny day on the same pier. A long shot of Lorelei shows her sitting on a wooden dock wagon, smoking nervously. The camera booms down to eye level and moves right as she stands to greet Kojak. The composition of this shot, with the wagon, cars and waterfront in the background, reverses the night-time image of the pier as bare and deserted. Busy sounds of boat traffic, sea gulls and police car radios also help to dispel the fears of the night before. Lorelei pleads with Kojak to tell her she may leave. She is under pressure because she is late for work, where she is scheduled to complete the production of her first television commercial. Kojak tells her that she is to be commended for reporting what she saw, and adds that it's worth a lot to him. Then he apologizes and explains that she will



have to go to the police station to help compose a drawing of the driver of the van. She "can't stand it!" and gets into a car to wait while Kojak discusses the situation with two other men. Finally she screams, "Lieutenant, please!" in agonized frustration.

By contrast, Kojak and his men are cool and methodical although he takes them to task for not having discovered a piece of bloody cardboard. (A close-up of the cardboard is the first and only shot of blood to be seen.) The busy atmosphere is added to by the flashing red lights atop the ambulance, which is pulling away, and on the police cars. When Kojak finally leaves to drive Lorelei to the police station, he pulls away with screeching tires, and the camera provides a long shot of the waterfront, with the clutter of police vehicles.

The daylight and the activity on the pier are a release from the fear and anxiety of the previous scene. However, there is a new kind of tension in Lorelei's impatience and her worrying about the job ahead of her. This scene also serves to introduce us to Kojak, with his commanding and somewhat condescending manner of speaking. He is portrayed as unflappable, efficient and totally in control. His men defer to his keener eye for clues, and to his assessment of Lorelei as not an "itchy witness", but as a "lady paying the price for liberation".



5.       Scene 5 moves to the police station where Lorelei is trying very hard to help a police artist compose a face that resembles the driver's. The office appears cramped and congested, and the noise of telephones and typewriters is continuous in the background. Kojak tries to soothe Lorelei when she laments that the composite face isn't perfect. She smiles, but remains nervous and swallows some pills. Kojak intercepts her cup of coffee, explaining that it's bad for her. She is observed from a distance by Captain McNeil who admires her looks, but who is surprised and concerned by her agitated state of mind. Kojak describes her as "an excellent witness", and explains her exhaustion and her job to Captain McNeil. He then remarks that he has read that advertising and police work are close competitors in the "nervous breakdown sweepstakes". Lorelei approaches Kojak, complaining again about being kept so late. She also comments on the fact that she would find it impossible to work within such an inefficient organization. Kojak tells her that they "get by on sweat" like most other people, although they would prefer to work like a "well-oiled machine". She asks to be driven to work, claiming that if she has to wait on the street for a taxi, "I will absolutely collapse!". Kojak finds a driver, thanks her for her help and gallantly kisses her hand.

          Stavros reports a lab confirmation of the blood on the cardboard and Kojak tells him to find out where the

cardboard came from. Another man announces the name of the victim and the college where he taught. Kojak summons Crocker to come with him to the college with a sarcastic "C'mon, let's get educated". Just before they leave, Kojak examines the composite drawing of Villiano which is shown in close-up. Music begins with this last shot and carries over to the following scene.

Police operations are presented here as efficient and thorough, though carried out in less than perfect conditions and under considerable pressure. The discussion of nerves and stress underlines the concern with the ability to bear up under psychological tensions. This also prepares us for the later attempt to make Lorelei crack under stress. In addition, there is the direct comparison between the stresses of advertising and police work, and Lorelei's unflattering contrast between police efficiency and her own.

6. Scenes 6 and 7 move the action to the college campus. There is an establishing shot of Kojak parking his car on the street outside, and a close-up of the campus map which he and Crocker consult before entering the building.

7. Quickly cutting to the interior of the psychology lab, the camera shows a close-up of a rat in a maze which is portrayed with the same design and colours of the campus map--a rather obvious comment on the educational institution.

The camera cuts to a medium shot of Villiano and Nystrom watching the rat trying to find its way through the maze. The boys refuse it a clear passage by giving it an electric shock. A fellow student protests their cruelty, and she declares that Professor would not tolerate such experiments which intentionally drive rats mad. Villiano calmly explains that he is interested in pushing an animal to the limits of its sanity. He also remarks that Draper will get fired if he does not start showing up on time.

At this point, Kojak enters with the school administrator who is describing Draper as one of his brightest instructors, hard-working and serious. He is surprised when Villiano turns to face him and Kojak (in long shot), and says that Draper is not in class. Music begins as the camera cuts between close-ups of Villiano and Kojak who unfolds the artist's drawing (medium shot). He compares the drawing to Villiano. The camera tilts and dollies in to a close-up of Kojak's face as the fact of recognition registers. The scene ends on this note of suspense, which presumably keeps the audience intrigued enough to watch through the commercial break that follows.

8. The music continues as Scene 8 opens. The camera gives a long shot of a busy city street during the day and then tilts up to show a modern black office building. Inside, Lorelei is seen arriving at her brightly lit, elegantly furnished office.

She gives instructions to her secretary to cancel a dinner engagement, and, among other things, to refill her prescriptions. She collapses into her high-backed executive chair and droops her arms helplessly over its sides. She then pours herself a glass of water from a decanter which is sitting beside a bottle of liquor, and gulps down the last of her pills "so I can get through the day". Her secretary remarks that the second prescription is to help her get through the night. Just as she begins to make a phone call, Crocker arrives to take her back to the police station to see if she can identify the suspect. She protests that she has too much to do, but finally agrees to do.

9.       Scene 9 opens on Villiano's distressed father talking impatiently with his lawyer and Nystrom in a corridor in the police station. He repeats to the lawyer what he has said to the police, denying that his son could have done anything wrong. He insists that young Bob did not leave the apartment after he and his wife went to bed, because he has exams and is exhausted. He proudly explains that Bob is at the top of his class because he has "pushed him all his life". Once again, there is reference to people under pressure, and to the need to achieve success. He threatens to make the police pay for what he regards as a ridiculous mistake, and adds that his wife has had to go under sedation because of the situation.

Kojak appears with a warrant to search Villiano's room, and his father is escorted away while Kojak leads the lawyer off for a conversation. Nystrom has dropped into the background so that he will not be noticed by the police.

In the next sequence, Lorelei and her secretary arrive. Lorelei gulps more pills, and is ushered in to view the line-up. Nystrom strikes up a casual conversation with her secretary and learns who the witness is. This exchange contains several references to advertising as "a rat race" and to the scene Lorelei had witnessed as (jokingly) "a typical night on the town". Her secretary wistfully admits that a woman can make it "really big" in advertising if it does not kill her first, and remarks that Lorelei has it all on the line right now. Nystrom gives her a false name and arranges for a dinner engagement. (It has to be dinner because she never gets "a decent lunch hour".)

Inside, Lorelei smokes nervously and quietly picks Villiano out of the line-up which can be seen through a small window. Music begins as the camera zooms in on Villiano's face framed in a small dark rectangle. Music is often used to reinforce points of significance in this way where it can add to an atmosphere of tension and excitement, or where the puzzle is one step closer to being solved.



10.       Scene 10 lays out the problems the police face. There isn't enough evidence, Villiano won't talk, and Lorelei may crack under the cross-examination of the tough defence attorney. The district attorney and Captain McNeil complain that they still have no motive, no weapon and no location for the crime. Finally, as Kojak sits discussing the situation with Captain McNeil, the camera dollies in to underscore the intensity of Kojak's feelings. He describes himself as being conditioned to hate creeps "who zap little dumb animals with electricity and stick knives in their instructors". Music begins with the two final close-ups of Kojak and McNeil and continues, to bridge the change of scenes.

11.       Scene 11 opens with an overhead shot showing the turn-of-the-century architecture of the front of the police station as Villiano comes out and gets into a limousine with Nystrom and his father. He has been released on \$25,000 bail. He declares loudly that the witness who identified him must be crazy, to which Nystrom calmly replies, "If she's not, she is pretty close". Villiano looks at Nystrom and says with interest, "Is she?".

12.       Scene 12 shows Nystrom and Villiano back at Nystrom's apartment discussing how victims of the rat race, like Lorelei, are clinging to sanity by a mere thread. Rats, of course, are squeaking in the background. They plan to increase the



aggravations and pressures Lorelei has to deal with to the point where she will eventually commit suicide. They think she is already a wreck, and they will ensure a suicide story because it is safest for them.

13.       Scene 13 returns to the police station. Kojak is seen throwing darts in the police office with typewriter noises in the background. Captain McNeil enters and remarks sarcastically that Kojak sets a fine example. Kojak responds that it's only for rest and relaxation, but interestingly enough the dart board is a wanted poster. Captain McNeil gets the information he came for, and Kojak then offers him an opportunity to throw darts himself. He refuses but then grabs the darts from Kojak's hands, accuses him of having stood too close to the dart board, and proceeds to hit the bull's eye. Light-hearted music accompanies this sequence, which is one of the few examples of comic relief in the whole program.

14.       With the music continuing, Scene 14 shows Kojak driving to the college, and then conferring in the psychology lab with another psychology professor about the low marks which Villiano received from Professor Draper. During this conversation, as might be expected, there is the sound of rats squeaking in the background. Professor Hooper admits that the mark which Draper gave Villiano may have been unusually low. Then he argues that such a brilliant, ambitious student

would not be mixed up with a murder. Kojak knowingly and cynically disagrees. At this point, music begins again to bridge the change of scenes.

15. Scene 15 opens in Lorelei's apartment which is flooded with daylight. The camera pans (in close-up) across two electric alarm clocks, a pill bottle and the telephone on a night table beside the bed where she is sleeping. In the background, besides music, there is the sound of sirens and traffic. The presence of two clocks underlines her concern with the pressure of time. She wakes up, grabs one clock and then the other. Both read 6:30, but when she reaches for her wrist watch, she realizes that in fact the time is 9:30. She scrambles to make a phone call, but finds that the line is dead. She then dashes around to get ready to leave, and outside on the street she waves frantically and shouts to flag down a taxi. Music continues throughout this scene with high-pitched strings playing an almost discordant melody.

All of this frenzy is counterpointed by the final shot of the scene. The camera zooms in, past the spot where Lorelei has just hailed a cab, to a service entrance. The door stands ajar, revealing Villiano as he coolly watches Lorelei leave, and checks his watch. The picture then fades to a commercial.

16. Scene 16 begins with the establishing shot of a busy street. Inside, in a studio control room, Lorelei's secretary is trying to apologize to Mr. Foreman, her superior, for the fact that Lorelei is not there on time. At this moment, she suddenly rushes in. Mr. Foreman expresses his irritation at such a display of tardiness and irresponsibility, further undermining Lorelei's confidence. The tension mounts as the success of her first television commercial begins to look dubious.

17. Scene 17, back at the police station, brings us up to date on the hunt for more evidence, first from some Chinese characters that were found on the bloody piece of cardboard, and secondly from splinters that were found in the victim's neck. Captain McNeil brings the latter to Kojak's attention as something that was previously ignored. This indicates that Kojak, who is constantly criticizing and even yelling at his subordinates, can also be guilty of oversights.

18. Scene 18 begins with Villiano in Lorelei's apartment, working with a cable behind her television set. He lets Nystrom in and they discuss the pills on her night table. Villiano recognizes them as the same type of sleeping pills that his mother uses. They plan to weaken the strength of them with baking powder, and later to plant stronger ones which would then effectively act as an overdose.

19. In Scene 19, Kojak visits Lorelei in an editing room to try to get her to remember more details about the box which held the body. She admits that she was worried about being there all alone, and didn't even think about the box. She gets moral support from her secretary, and the editor suggests that she run down the scene detail by detail, as she does so well with film. This sequence is one of the most reinforcing of the entire program for Lorelei's morale. Even Kojak has to look up to speak to her because he is seated, whereas in other conversations he towers over her.

She describes the scene again and remembers that Villiano pulled a metal rod out of the box to smash the light bulb. They are interrupted by a call from Mr. Foreman, and Lorelei in a shaky voice makes an impossible promise to be finished in 20 minutes. Kojak remarks sarcastically on her well-oiled machine, and urges her to be gentle on herself. He also assures her that she is important.

20. Scene 20 opens with eerie music on a dark street as Lorelei arrives home in a taxi. She enters her dimly lit apartment whose green walls somewhat resemble the institutional green of the police station and the green walls of the editing room. She immediately turns on the television set which provides nothing but static and snow. She fiddles impatiently with the knobs and then turns it off. She tries to light a cigarette

with her table lighter, but it won't work. Nor are there any matches on her shelf, and she throws the empty box impatiently to the floor. She takes a glass from the shelf and moves into the dark kitchen. She opens the refrigerator door and is startled when something falls off and hits the floor. The sudden bright light from inside the refrigerator is also startling in the dark room. She cries "Stop it!" in exasperation, and slams the door shut. The music stops just as the phone rings in the other room. She answers in an irritated voice, showing her edginess. In fact, the caller is Nystrom posing as a man from Montreal who is looking for new talent. The camera cuts to Nystrom on the telephone and shows Villiano in the foreground, blowing smoke at a rat in the cage. Lorelei is flattered by the offer of an employment interview and agrees to meet "Mr. Wesson" later in the week. She hangs up the phone, takes three pills which we have seen in close-up in her hand, and music begins again.

The tension and anxiety of this scene is communicated by the music, the dark atmosphere and by the understandable frustrations of a noisy, malfunctioning television set, a lighter that doesn't work, and empty matchboxes. Because of this tension, the shock of the object tumbling out of the refrigerator and the bright light flooding into the kitchen is that much greater. Furthermore, the audience knows, as



Lorelei does not, that Villiano has been in her apartment and may still be about.

21.       Scene 21 opens with the camera tilting up on the front of the police station as the music continues. Inside the building, there is an informal conference about the possible nature of the metal rod that Lorelei saw Villiano take from the box. The suggestion finally emerges that it might have come from an ice-box with an ice-maker, and the pursuit is on to track down ice-box distributors. One detective jokingly refers to the wonderful brain trust that they comprise, but Kojak very sarcastically promises to get to get them a yo-yo for Christmas, with instructions on how to make it do "up and down and up and down".

22.       Scene 22 shows Lorelei nervously waiting for Mr. Foreman to view the finished commercial on a movieola. He tells her that he doesn't like it much, and asks that someone else come in to fix up the "choppy places". She defends the editing, but he observes that she's been under a strain, and that it shows in her work. He suggests that she work on some print copy for next week, but she protests the demotion. He then cites her unprofessional conduct in showing up late for a recording session, but she explains that someone left the wrong information on her answering machine, and the audience is left to suspect yet another instance of foul play engineered by

Villiano. He coolly observes that she is not in good shape, and that, in fact, she needs more sleep right now, not more responsibility.

After he leaves, she breaks down and sobs to her secretary and the editor that she divorced a quiet husband in Chicago because he wanted children and she wanted a career. Now she is not sure why she did it: she can't see the point in trying to sell a plastic hairbrush. At the editor's suggestion, her secretary takes her away to make her lie down in her office.

23. Scene 23, at the police station again, is filled with increasing tensions, supported by typewriter noise, telephones, sirens and raised voices. No splinters were found in the floors of Villiano's home, but there was an ice-box delivered to an apartment building whose address matches that of one of Draper's students, Carey Nystrom. Music builds as the camera zooms in to Nystrom's name on the list of addresses. Kojak quickly dispatches his men on pertinent errands, and the picture cuts to a commercial.

24. Scene 24 is another brief scene at the advertising office in which the subdued Lorelei is called to the phone to speak to Mr. Wesson (Nystrom). He arranges to meet her at her apartment that evening. She is considerably cheered by the

She hangs up dismayed, and the music begins again. We are shown Villiano outside her door, looking somewhat perplexed at the silence inside the apartment.

Once again Lorelei's apartment is softly lit, but not as dark as in Scene 20. The atmosphere this time is one of expectancy rather than fear. Interestingly enough, she has put up her hair and donned an alluring gown for the occasion. When she quietly hangs up the phone, we see her in long shot: a smaller, more vulnerable person in the corner of the room.

27. Scene 27 follows the police at night to Nystrom's apartment building. Outside, beside the steps to the entrance, Crocker discovers a discarded refrigerator box. He identifies it as one which matches the scrap of cardboard that was found on the pier. There is a sense of impending victory, and security in numbers as the five policemen forge ahead into the building. The music ends with this shot.

In the apartment, Nystrom is teasing the rat with a carrot and speaking to Villiano who is calling from a phone booth. Villiano says he is sure that Lorelei has "done it", that is, committed suicide, because there was no crying, no hysterics and no noise coming from the apartment. He announces that he is going in to find out.

Kojak demands that Nystrom "Open up!" much as Draper did in Scene 2. His subordinates present a search

prospect, but the audience knows it to be a false hope and the feeling of apprehension is aroused. The cuts to Nystrom on the telephone in his apartment show Villiano standing in the background listening, while the rats squeak.

25. Scene 25 continues in Nystrom's apartment after the telephone conversation. He and Villiano are speaking in significant tones about how a rat can be excited at the prospect of a carrot. Then when the carrot is yanked away, the rat "falls apart". All the while Villiano baits a rat in its cage with a carrot, and presumably thinks how Lorelei will fall apart when the phoney job offer is cancelled. Villiano shows Nystrom the heavy duty pills which he will plant in her apartment. He overrides his friend's fears and objections, and leaves as eerie music begins. The camera tracks into a close-up of Nystrom teasing the rat with a carrot.

26. The music continues as Scene 26 opens with a close-up of Lorelei. To complement the dolly in, which was a closing shot of Scene 25, the camera then dollies out to a medium shot of Lorelei as she smokes nervously and studies some papers. The music stops as the telephone rings and she rushes to answer it. A quick shot shows Villiano listening outside her door. The caller is Wesson (Nystrom) who cancels the appointment because he doesn't want anyone who isn't ready for the work.

warrant, and then scurry about at his direction to check the bleached spot on the wood flooring. Kojak sits down and picks up the carrot to tease the rat. He informs Nystrom that they know it all now, having talked to Professor Hooper. Crocker confirms that there was blood on the floor, and Kojak orders his men to arrest Nystrom and tell him his rights. Before they have a chance, however, Nystrom weakly objects, and then confesses everything as they handcuff him. He even explains that Villiano changed the dosage of the pills in Lorelei's apartment, and was there at that very moment. Kojak impatiently hurls the carrot on the floor and rushes out as music begins again.

28.       Scene 28 begins with the sombre music continuing as Lorelei looks distractedly at herself in front of the bathroom mirror. She is holding a pair of scissors, as if she was trimming her hair, and slowly puts them down. There is a close-up of the door lock as Villiano opens it. Lorelei starts when she hears a click, as Villiano quietly closes the door behind him. He moves stealthily across the room and checks the pill bottle on the night table. Finding that it is still full, he moves toward the bathroom and hears a stifled cry from behind the shower curtain. He slowly and deliberately pulls back the curtain. She whimpers and tells him to go away. Then in an overhead shot, she is seen trying to stab him with a pair of scissors. He catches her hand and points the



scissors (still in her hand) toward her, and tells her to kill herself instead.

Suddenly the police break down the door, rush in with guns drawn, grab Villiano, and push him up against a wall with a gun at his throat. Kojak sees Lorelei almost transfixed, with the scissors still poised to stab herself. She doesn't respond when he calls her name, and for a tense few seconds she seems intent on carrying out Villiano's suggestion of suicide. Kojak urgently whispers her name again, seizes her hand and tells her to drop the scissors. She obeys this time and the scissors clatter into the bathtub where she is standing. She collapses, crying, into Kojak's arms.

29. Scene 29 forms an epilogue for the story. The street is filled with police cars whose radios chatter, and there are traffic noises and horns honking in the background. The flashing red lights of the ambulance and police cars form a visual staccato passing across the faces of Kojak and Villiano.

Kojak denounces Villiano who replies, "All I did was push the buttons". Kojak promises him life imprisonment in the maze of Attica, with an occasional visit and a piece of cheese if he is good. He then pushes Villiano into the police car. In some ways, Kojak is portrayed as almost as hard as the criminal, with his anger, hatred and bitter sarcasm. However, he displays more compassion in the earlier scenes

with Lorelei, and for Crocker in this one. Crocker is about to dash back into the building to begin the report, when Kojak yells at him to come back. He tells Crocker to slow down and take it easy. Pleasant music begins at this point, as he hands Crocker a lollipop. The frame freezes on Kojak smiling and reaching out with a second lollipop, as if offering a toast. Soft piano music accompanies the freeze frame and credits appear just before the commercial break. The final credits flash on a dark screen which shows stills from the program in the upper left-hand corner, to the accompaniment of the exciting theme music.

An Interpretation of the Kojak episode "Life, Liberation, and the Pursuit of Death"

Our analysis begins with a comparison of story elements of Kojak and Hawaii Five-O. Table 1 illustrates the parallelism of the two plots, and shows that most of the plot elements are more or less identical in substance (though differing in surface detail). In some cases, one story element is the inverse of the other; thus while in Hawaii Five-O, the perpetrator of the original crime is killed by an authority figure, in Kojak it is the authority figure who is killed by the perpetrator of the initial crime. Related to this inversion, and following from it, is a second: in Hawaii

Five-0, the discoverer of the crime is a "baddie", in Kojak, the discoverer of the crime is a "goodie". Other inversions will appear during our analysis. These are important, because while both episodes are derived from one underlying story frame, the presence of inversions at critical points in the story line results in the two stories conveying a very different meaning.

Let us examine several of the differences between the two programs in more detail.

First, in both cases, a "pre-story" state of disequilibrium is alluded to: in Hawaii Five-0, for example, the accidental death of Brian's two parents is seen to have triggered off a sequence of events, leading up to the initial crime. Thus the initial disturbance is an extrinsic, random, event, not connected to an intrinsic defect in the social system as such. Consequently when the events have run their full course, the return to serenity is made very evident to the viewer, and the final feeling is one of sadness, or expiation accompanied by a return to security.

Table 2

A comparison of the story elements of the  
Hawaii Five-O and Kojak  
episodes

<u>Hawaii Five-O</u>	<u>Kojak</u>
0. Equilibrium disturbed by accidental death of parents	0. Equilibrium disturbed by "pushing" ambition of father
1. Initial crime: rape/incest (=violation of social order)	1. Initial crime: animal torture (=violation of social order)
2. Intervention of authority figure (punishment)	2. Intervention of authority figure (punishment)
3. Death of disturber of social order (after violent quarrel)	3. Death of authority figure (after escalating sequence: blackmail attempt, threats, second blackmail attempt, assault)
4. Concealment of body and other evidence of crime	4. Concealment of body and other evidence of crime
5. Discovery of crime and location of body by 3rd party (investigator)	5. Discovery of crime and location of body by third party (witness)
6. Intervention of police--beginning of search	6. Intervention of police--beginning of search
7. Police begin to suspect identity of murderer	7. Police discover identity of murderer
8. Investigator's knowledge is made known to accomplice of murderer	8. Witness' knowledge is discovered through a trick by accomplice of murderer
9. The police are impotent to act without evidence (which has been hidden first by murderer and then by investigator)	9. The police are impotent to act without evidence (which has been hidden by murderer)

Table 2 (Cont'd)

Story Elements of Hawaii Five-O	Story Elements of Kojak
10. Murderer's accomplice decides to silence investigator	10. Murderer and accomplice decide to silence witness
11. Investigator is murdered	11. Witness is tortured
12. Police find conclusive evidence	12. Police find conclusive evidence
	13. Witness, driven to the edge of suicide by murderers' actions, is rescued at last moment by police
14. Police capture murderer	14. Police capture murderer
15. There is a sense that a crime has been expiated, and that social equilibrium is restored	15. There is a sense that retribution has been done, but the criminal seems unaware of the enormity of his crime, and the sense of resulting equilibrium is fragile

In Kojak, the pre-story disequilibrium is conveyed by the intervention of Villiano's father to the effect that his son was at the top of his class because the father has "pushed him all his life". The sole reason for the presence of this character in the story seems to be to pronounce this one line. Bob Villiano becomes a victim of overweening ambition. Here the initial disequilibrium is portrayed not as an accident but



rather as an intrinsic inconsistency within the social system itself. Hence even when the course of events triggered off by Villiano and Nystrom's "zapping little dumb animals" has run its full course, there is no sense of release from a burden such as we find in Hawaii Five-O; indeed Villiano's only comment is "All I did was push the buttons!", indicating his failure to understand the nature of his own crime. He has followed the logic of the system, exemplified by the "maze" of the university and the ruthless rat race of the ad agency. Thus while the final interview between McGarrit and Mrs. Henderson is good-humored and marked by mutual respect, Kojak's attitude to Villiano is summed up by his sarcastic remarks about lifetime imprisonment in the "maze" of Attica, and giving him a "piece of cheese" if he's "good", accompanied by physical manifestations of distaste as he pushes Villiano into the car. Thus the final equilibrium of the Kojak episode is fragile, and is presumably intended to convey a sense of unease on the part of the viewer.

I have also suggested that there is an equivalence between the initial crime of Brian in Hawaii Five-O (incest and/or rape) and the crime of Villiano in Kojak (torture of dumb animals). I do not mean to go into detail here on the subject (the interested reader may find an excellent treatment of the subject by the distinguished English anthropologist Edmund Leach in Lenneberg (1964) and in Maranda (1972)),

except to assert that not only do powerful taboos apply to the behavior of siblings and quasi-siblings occupying contiguous living quarters, similar taboos apply to the relations of men with respect to animals with whom they have daily contact in the course of their work. These latter taboos, Leach has clearly shown, also have a sexual basis. Thus not only was Villiano contravening scientific standards of acceptable ethical limits to experimentation, he was also overstepping the bounds of a much more universal taboo concerning relations to close animals, in that sadism such as he manifests is commonly understood to be a variant of sexual relationship. Thus the disgust of his instructor, Draper, is to be understood as having more than one level, and is meant to reflect a quite profound sense of violation of the essential social order, which is correlated in this story with distortion of professional standards (those of the scientist) and excessive ambition or competitiveness. Kojak's outburst about "creeps" who "zap little dumb animals" and stick knives in their professors is clearly meant to express a legitimate sense of outrage at the violation of a basic social tenet. If we do not understand this, then the violence of the reaction of Kojak to the crime, expressed both verbally and non-verbally (for example in his symbolic dart-throwing), must appear unmotivated.

In both shows, the initial crime motivates the intervention of an authority figure. Again there are further

parallels: in both cases we are to understand that the authority figure appears in an extended sense as a father to the person to be punished. In Hawaii Five-O, the authority figure is the grandfather who "stands in" for an absent father. In Kojak, the authority figure is a "corporate" father; a blood relationship has been replaced by a professional relationship. (This change of status occurs for young men in primitive as well as in modern societies.) Thus in both cases the relationship is by no means between strangers. Rather, the person to be punished is one who would normally take over the functions of the authority figure at some future date. His failure to live up to appropriate social standards threatens the continued existence of the social order which the authority figure represents. Thus the conflict is far from incidental; it touches the essential interests of the micro-society represented by the particular lineage pattern in question (the family in Hawaii Five-O, the scientific corporation in Kojak). It can also be understood allegorically as a commentary on the whole society's need to maintain continuity and social order.

The image of society projected in the two programs is, however, quite different. In Hawaii Five-O, society as represented by the Henderson family is rich, powerful and honourable.

The comments and deportment of the police towards the family are respectful, even deferential. Physically, the family is portrayed as living above the bustle of life; nature (in the form of trees and plants) is very present, but beautifully ordered and controlled, neither allowed to proliferate in natural abundance nor deformed or aborted. When danger threatens, the family is easily able to surmount it: grandfather Thomas first humiliates and then kills the errant grandson Brian, grandmother Agatha openly makes a joke out of the blackmail attempt by Marshall and then kills him efficiently, and, finally captured by the police, she accepts the situation with equanimity (she promptly calls her lawyer) and without loss of face or dignity.

The family cannot of course resolve alone the dilemma of how to punish transgression without itself committing transgressions, but this failure implies no commentary on the strength of the society. It is a manifestation of an inherent logical contradiction, to which every human is subject.

In Kojak, the image of society is more uncertain. While Draper, as an instructor, is "bright", "hard-working", "serious", he proves unable to cope with the threat presented by the behavior of Villiano and Nystrom. First, he attempts to give them (unjustifiably) low marks, but this quickly backfires, because he allows himself to be caught in a



compromising situation (exiting from a "gay" bar). He is able to reject with vigor the first blackmail attempt (although his threat to the effect that they will "pay for it" is not completely convincing), but he then shows himself vulnerable to influence through his friendship with a homosexual. His attempt at physical force is easily repelled by Villiano, and he is unequal to the counter-attack by the latter, and is thus killed. Similarly, the attitudes expressed by the police (that most important of barometers of the dramatist's intention) toward the society within which Draper lives range from ambivalence to open skepticism: "Let's get educated" says Kojak sarcastically; the campus is visually compared to a maze, thus suggesting an artificially constructed environment and a regimented society. The administrator of the school proves to be an easy dupe of Villiano, in spite of the outright corruption of the latter's behavior (visible in the preceding scene even to his female fellow student), and is openly patronized by Kojak.

A second social reality portrayed in the episode is that of the ad agency. Lorelei is honest, conscientious ("an excellent witness"), and hard-working. She is also nervous, a prey to drugs, and, in spite of her own and her co-workers' great efforts, unsuccessful. Society, as exemplified in Lorelei's world, is a "rat race": to succeed one must constantly push (the parallel with Villiano's father is clear);



one's superiors are cold, ruthless and endlessly demanding. Like Villiano, Lorelei is a victim of overweening ambition (having divorced her husband); unlike him, Lorelei is a dupe and is easily deceived by Villiano: her weakness leads to her downfall.

By contrast, the society of policemen is sketched in much greater detail than is the case with Hawaii Five-O. Authority is properly executed: Kojak chastizes his underlings for their oversight, but then the arrogant Kojak in turn is shown to have overlooked evidence by his superior (who also bests him at darts). In other words, ambition is socially channeled. The society of policemen is strong and unified; there exists mutual respect, and efficiency. It is a society able in appearance to deal with every anti-social menace, and indeed would be even more powerful were it not for the shackles imposed on it by outside constraints (namely the legal system).

The additional attention given to delineating the society of policemen serves to point up by contrast the weakness of other forms of society and their inability to protect themselves, or to deal with their own internal inconsistencies. The parallel between police society and the advertising society of Lorelei is made explicitly on several occasions: Lorelei criticizes the inefficiency of police routine, but the reverse is shown to hold in reality, leading

Kojak to comment sarcastically on Lorelei's "well-oiled machine"; in Lorelei's world superiors make great demands in work and yet treat one without compassion or humor, while in the world of police, although the pressures are as great (close competitors in the "nervous breakdown sweepstakes"), subordinates are treated with consideration ("Take it easy, Crocker") and humor. And so on. While there are not so many explicit comparisons between police society and university society, visual imagery is used to point up the contrast.

Thus the function "killing" has a quite different meaning in the two stories, which is expressed by the inversion sinner killed (Hawaii Five-O)/sinner kills (Kojak). In the first case, we are to understand that society is capable of punishing its own transgressions but falls into an impossible contradiction in so doing, from which it can emerge only through outside mediation; in the second case, we are to understand that society is unable to punish its own transgressions, and must be rescued by the intervention of an outside agency (namely one which exemplifies the true virtues).

This first inversion leads to a second: in both stories, much of the story is taken up with a struggle between the investigator/witness who "unearths" (or "unwaters" in the case of Kojak) the body of the victim, and the murderer and/or his accomplice. In Hawaii Five-O, the lines of the conflict are

clearly drawn: it is a struggle between greed and honor, easily won by honor. In Kojak, the contrast is more complicated. First both Villiano/Nystrom (taking them as a single personage on this dimension) and Lorelei are driven by a need to excel. Both are victims of over-weening ambition (which has led Lorelei to abandon her husband and a good social relationship); and both are engaged in highly competitive fields of activity, for ends of dubious social value (zapping dumb animals in one instance, producing ads for "plastic hairbrushes" in the other). Furthermore, while Villiano is guilty of being a sadist, Lorelei is guilty of masochism. For example, in imposing impossible constraints on herself, she deliberately subjects herself to situations within which she is tortured (it is to be recalled that her subjection to drugs, the result of her constant anxiety, precedes the opening of the story); thus the relationship between Villiano-Nystrom and Lorelei is in some sense symbiotic--one for which Lorelei shares a measure of guilt, and for which she also is punished (in blowing her golden opportunity).

Again the inversion of a story element, as one passes from one program to the other, is used to convey a very different kind of meaning. Hawaii Five-O seems more "old-fashioned" in style and theme; by contrast, the violence of Kojak is more frightening.

Police Story

"The Wyatt Earp Syndrome"

Broadcast on CBC (July 2, 1976, at 10:00 p.m.) and NBC

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Story Résumé

1. The opening teaser of this episode of Police Story was made up of excerpts from the story itself. These proved to be the most violent, exciting moments within the story, presented in the standard montage of quick cuts, accompanied by music, sound effects and intros of the principal characters. In fact, it proved to be one of the most violent teasers I watched in the sample selected.

2. The program's first scene takes place in a police locker room, where the principal personage of this episode, Nations, is hanging up things in his locker. A young black policeman, Hawkins, approaches him and introduces himself as Nations' new partner. Nations greets him cordially but without warmth, even with reserve if not hauteur. It is ascertained that Hawkins is fresh out of police academy. Nations comments tersely: "You're working with a real cop now".

3. The next scene occurs in the briefing room of the police station. Police officers, standing at attention in two neat rows,

are being addressed by (presumably) their captain, who is discussing certain assignments, e.g., an "evangelist" who kills and prays, etc. He ends with a strict statement about the importance of police attitude, including saying "Please", "Sir", and "Ma'am". The atmosphere connotes military academy much more than a police station, as the prevailing view of things would have it.

4. In the patrol car, Nations asks Hawkins if Coleman Hawkins, the jazz musician, belongs to his family. Hawkins has never heard of the musician, and comments, "We're not all related, you know!" There then follows an arrest scene (a speeder). The culprit proves to be a professor late for a lecture, who has already received one speeding ticket the day before. He reaches toward the glove pocket of the car for his driving licence, and his gesture provokes an immediate response on the part of Nations who instantly whips his service revolver from his holster and covers the driver. This gesture is very shocking, and is accentuated by the camera work. At the same time, the language of Nations is very polite, and he remains soft-spoken throughout. This, combined with his clean-cut physical appearance, contrasts with the violence of his act, under the circumstances. The contrast is made more stark by the low-key conversation which has preceded, which emphasizes the human side of a cop's life. As the scene ends, a call



for assistance comes in on the car radio. "That's us" says Nations.

5. The police car pulls up on a cloverleaf entrance to a superhighway. A small girl is standing beside the highway. As the police car pulls up, she runs away. The two policemen follow. She scampers under a fence and towards an underpass, pursued by the policemen. Someone is lying crumpled in the underpassage. "Your mommy?" She nods. Although the child is not communicative, we learn that it happened last night, that the woman has been shot with a gun, and that the child is Melanie Peters from nearby Bakersfield. In the ambulance, Nations continues to question the child. It was at a shopping center; the man told them to get in the car, a 2-door blue sedan; he had a moustache, reddish hair; size and age are indeterminate, although he was fairly young; the mother's name was Shirley Peters.

6. The action shifts to Nations' own home. As he enters, his wife is in discussion with a group of earnest young men. Nations' own daughter, who is almost exactly the same age as Melanie, is standing in a corner as punishment for some minor peccadillo. Nations greets her with affection. We now hear part of the conversation which is concerned with the issue of whether a sound which is not heard can be said to exist. An attempt is made to bring Nations into the discussion: his

wife tries to explain the issue to her husband, but her efforts are rejected sharply as patronizing. Sombre music is employed throughout the scene to emphasize the bad vibes. Pinned down, Nations answers directly that a sound is a sound whether or not anyone hears it. He then goes on to describe the situation of the little girl whose mother has been abducted, raped and murdered, in the presence of her little daughter. "How's that for an abstract question?" he says to the group. He then turns to his wife, noting that he has smelt the pizza on his daughter's breath. "I don't feel like pizza again tonight," he says, and leaves.

7. Nations is discovered in a bar, in civvies, drinking with a girl and another couple (one of whom is also a policeman). The girl comments on his gun which sticks in her ribs as she gets close to him. Nations is maudlin: he is talking about civilization, and the distinction between people and animals. The only think that keeps us civilized is the law, the courts. "You're drunk," says the girl affectionately. "No one understands a policeman, Marge," he says to his girl friend. The presence of his gun is again called attention to. The scene ends with Nations arriving home, and going to bed. For a moment he tenderly strokes the form of his sleeping wife.

8. In the office, Nations discusses the case with

his superior. The detailed information in the files is gone over.

9. In the patrol car, Nations and Hawkins are cruising when the former spots a very pretty girl walking along the street. He executes a quick U-turn and pulls up beside her. On the false pretext that there has been a report of a man molesting women in the area, he strikes up a conversation with her. He elicits the information that she is married, but not too happily. He then makes a date with her to visit her in her apartment at a certain hour.

10. In the hospital room of Melanie, Nations meets her father. He speaks to Melanie with tenderness, promising to take her on a picnic if her father doesn't object. "Tell him your boyfriend's a policeman," he says. As he leaves, the father follows, requesting information about the killer. He pleads: "When you catch him, give me just five minutes alone with him." Nations refuses, saying that's his job: "If it was up to me, I'd loan you my gun," he says.

11. At home, Nations and his wife are discussing the breakup of their marriage. The wife doesn't want Debbie to hear, but Nations says, let her hear. She is sent away. The wife admits to being scared to split up. Nations says he wants "a real woman, not a part-time college girl". We're not going to split up, he asserts. After some prodding, he finally agrees

to an interview with the police psychiatrist, the "company shrink". "You make the appointment," he says.

12. In the patrol car, Nations decides to investigate the possibility that the kidnapper/rapist/killer is holed up in a motel. For his efforts he is bawled out by the detective assigned to the case who complains that every time he arrives at a motel Nations has been there first. "It's my job," he says. "Play detective on your own time," he snarls at Nations.

13. In Dr. Ross', the psychiatrist's, office, Nations has reneged and is a no-show. His wife goes ahead with the interview. She explains the marriage is not working: her husband is "distant, cold, and angry". The psychiatrist describes the symptoms: typically he would prefer to be with his police buddies<sup>?</sup> The wife nods in agreement. It is the "Wyatt Earp syndrome", and it occurs about three years after joining the force. The individual begins playing cop twenty-four hours a day. After more about the psychology of the cop, the psychiatrist counsels patience, because it is a phase which does go away.

14. Nations and Hawkins are sitting in a deli, eating, when the former perceives a car and driver which generally match the description of the suspected killer. A quick, violent pursuit

follows. The driver is pulled roughly from his car and made to hold the classic position (hands on the roof, feet straddled away from the car), while Hawkins holds a gun on him. Under the front seat, Nations finds a packet of hash.

15. Nations is chewed out by his superior for overstretching his authority. Nations first uses the excuse of a traffic violation. It will be difficult to justify his having conducted a search of the car (and hence finding the drugs) without some reasonable presumption of guilt. Nations admits the car and person fit the description of the wanted kidnapper. Are you turning this into a personal manhunt, asks his superior?

16. In a bar, Nations encounters the detective again (Keitlinger). The latter sarcastically comments on the gung-ho tendencies of Nations. Vinnie, the barkeep, ex-cop and wise voice of experience, gives Nations a kindly chewing-out, emphasizing the need to keep the role of the policeman in perspective. Although the criticism of Nations for his excesses is harsh, an overall atmosphere of affection is conveyed. It is made very clear, however, that Nations' single-minded pursuit of the killer is not correct behavior, as judged by his peers.

17. At home, Nations looks in on his sleeping child. His wife is in bed watching television. She comments on his missing



the interview, and then she says, "I'm leaving you." "You're not leaving," he says, but it is clear that they are at an impasse.

18. At a garage, Nations obtains information from the gas attendant (under some duress). It is the cousin of the attendant, Edward Doyle, and he is holed up in another motel. His car is a Mustang. Nations elects to corner the suspect himself without waiting for support. A build-up of suspense begins, signalled as usual by the use of background music. The suspect is "armed and dangerous": Hawkins is instructed to stay out of the way while Nations single-handedly makes the arrest. Nations approaches the room of the suspect, carrying a rifle. He bangs on the door and throws it open. The man inside starts to reach for his gun, and both he and Nations shoot. The kidnapper's bullet kills Hawkins, who has not obeyed the instruction to stay out of sight.

19. Nations is interviewed by his superior. "I just followed procedure," he pleads. "What made you decide to go in by yourself?" he is asked. There is no answer.

20. At home, Nations finds the house empty, his wife and daughter departed. She has left a letter. Nations breaks out in tears. "I'm sorry," he says. The show ends on a burst of police channel chatter, leaving Nations desolate in his own home.

Interpretation of the Police Story episode:"The Wyatt Earp Syndrome"

The Police Story episode was probably the most violent of all the shows I watched in this sample, both in quantity and in apparent realism. It was also one of the most complex in plot structure, and the one where I felt that violence was being used to effective dramatic purpose, rather than serving as a dollop of excitement to enliven a pedestrian story. In spite of these differences, I believe the story of "The Wyatt Earp Syndrome" is a variant of the same plot we say portrayed in Hawaii Five-O and Kojak, although one important element has been dropped, and the ordering of the other elements is altered. By these latter devices, the message it conveys is quite different from the two preceding shows.

The story begins with an initial crime: the kidnap-rape-murder of a young girl. The crime is thus sexual, as it was explicitly in Hawaii Five-O and implicitly in Kojak. Furthermore, the sexual act involved is "natural" in the restricted use of that term we have developed here (in contradistinction to culturally refined, or socially controlled and approved). This point is made very strongly in Nations' long bar soliloquy: he explicitly contrasts "civilized" to "animal" behavior, and argues that the only thing which keeps human bestiality within bounds is the presence of social

sanctions, as exemplified by the police. Nobody understands the police, he argues: it is clear from his previous conversation at home that he thinks of society as blind to the destructive natural (uncivilized) forces which menace it. Through this long sequence, the brutal (i.e. sub-human nature) of the crime is stressed, contrasting with the blindness of society to its own danger.

So, the initial crimes of the three shows may be compared in the following way:

Table 3

A Comparison of the Initial Acts of Three Shows:  
Hawaii Five-O, Kojak, and Police Story

Hawaii Five-O	Kojak	Police Story
Sexual Assault (with sibling = incest)	Sexual Assault (with animals = bestiality)	Sexual Assault (with stranger = kidnap-rape)

Note, however, a fundamental difference: in the first two instances, the sexual act is associated with the dangers of intimacy; in the latter case, the sexual act is associated with the dangers of anonymity. Levi-Strauss has argued that the incest taboo is necessary for the maintenance of normal

human patterns of reciprocity; it is equally true that what one might call an "excest taboo" is also necessary, since the coupling of complete strangers, on some random principle, is equally an offense against the basic principles of civilized patterns of mutual obligation and exchange.<sup>1</sup> It is clear that such sexual acts inspire horror equivalent to that associated with incest.

Now let us consider the second story element: the intervention of the appropriate authority figure to punish the perpetrator of the initial crime. At first glance, it may seem that this element is absent, but this is incorrect. The intervention occurs, however, during the scene when Nations encounters the father of Melanie. "Leave me alone with him for five minutes" says the father, and both Nations and the audience understand that what is involved is private retribution.

<sup>1</sup>Kidnap-rape has often in the past been associated with the state of war: traditionally, one of the spoils of victory of an invading army included the despoliation of women property, as well as the sacking of cities, and the destruction of personal property. In the present case, the despoiler is perceived as an alienated individual within the society, uncivilized, rather than a member of an alien society, hence civilized within his own society. In one case the threat is from within the society (what we term "excest" for want of a better term); in the other the threat is from without the society. The notion of an anonymous society is of quite recent origin, comparatively speaking.



Thus the punishment by the appropriate authority figure, in this instance the husband, occurs, but in symbolic form only, and comparatively late in the story. The very anonymity of the attacker has made the appropriate authority figure impotent to deal with the offense, pragmatically, but the function is maintained within the story.

And it is around this central impotence of the appropriate authority figure within a well-regulated society that the central inversion of the story turns: the man who should be mediator, Nations, becomes in fact a substitute avenger. To the father he says "It's my job", but his own colleagues and his wife understand that his zeal goes far beyond what is expected of him within his job description: he becomes in fact a proxy father, on whom falls the primary responsibility of performing an act of raw retribution. "What made you decide to go in by yourself?" asks his chief; the answer is hinted at in the title: Wyatt Earp was a nineteenth-century "lawman", who carried the honorific title of "marshall" and who patrolled the streets of the wildest of all the cowtowns, Dodge City, Kansas, and one of the most wide-open of all mining towns, Tombstone, Arizona. As tough as the wildest of outlaws his function was to inspire fear in the hearts of the uncivilized and so to provide breathing room for the small but growing local society. In other words, society can only be maintained by the



law of the gun: retribution is primary. "No one understands a policeman, Marge," says Nations.

It can be no accident that Nations, like the husband of the murdered woman, is the father of a young girl child (Melanie and his own daughter are identical in age). In fact, his relations with his own daughter are less than completely at ease: either his daughter is under her mother's discipline and hence cannot talk to him, or is to be sent out of the room while he and his wife quarrel, or she is asleep. The tension in the house prevents them from being close. The reverse is true with Melanie: by far the tenderest scene in the episode occurs between Nations and the latter. In this scene, the feelings of the father are expressed. In other words, the rape-murder of Melanie's mother becomes, on a symbolic level, the rape-murder of his own child's mother. We shall return to this point in a minute.

Similarly, Nations is estranged from his own wife; in order to think through his problem he is compelled to turn to Marge in the bar.

From this flows the consequence that the killing of the rapist in the motel by Nations is equivalent to the third function of Hawaii Five-O (the death of the disturber of the social order), and to the inverse function of Kojak (the

killing by the disturber of the social order). On this essential point, the interview with the chief of police which follows leaves no doubt that Nations has not acted as a policeman, but as someone engaged in a personal vendetta.

Unlike the other stories, however, and because of the substitution transformation (policeman father for injured party father) which has occurred, the sequel is not the same. In *Police Story*, Nations, by his own assumption of a vicarious function of revenge, has alienated both his colleagues and his own wife and child. There can be no sequel: he is left to weep alone, to say "I'm sorry", and to be taunted by the very call to duty which has somehow let him down.

What is identical is the police chase sequence. As before, the body is discovered by a witness (the child). As before, the child is able to furnish the bare information on which the eventual identification will be based. As before, the police review the available evidence making reference to scientific procedures. As before, a patient process of search begins. As before, there is a point at which the identification of the criminal occurs. From this point on, the story diverges, however; the police do not yet really possess sufficient evidence of guilt. It is here in fact that a displacement occurs: instead of the apprehension of

the guilty by officers of justice, a shootout between aggressor and retributor occurs, producing a distortion of the "logical" sequence of events, a distortion which is already prefigured in the earlier distortion implied by the anonymous sex killing.

In spite of this warping of the story line, I believe that the Plot of Police Story is a transformation of that which generated Hawaii Five-O and Kojak. The syntactic and semantic transformations are so great, however, that a completely different meaning is conveyed by the story: if we were to characterize the Hawaii Five-O story as basically optimistic in tone, that of Kojak as tending to cynical, then the Police Story episode would have to be classed as essentially pessimistic. Unlike Kojak, at no point does it descend into cynicism; instead, it presents a logical (i.e., mythological) dilemma with undiluted directness.

The sexual theme pervades the episode. For example, when Nations seduces the pretty stranger on the street, the parallel between his action and the initial crime of the show is clear. When he first speaks to the girl, he uses as a pretext reports about a fictitious molester of women in the vicinity, but the audience is aware that it is Nations who is the actual molester. Yet, his reference to the molester inevitably recalls the earlier crime. The murderer kidnaps and

sexually assaults his victim; Nations picks up and symbolically has sexual relations with his "victim". In both cases, the relationship occurs between complete strangers.

This same incident re-introduces a second theme: the girl who responds to Nations' advances and invites him to her apartment is married, but not happily.

Nations' wife is also unhappily married.

Furthermore, we learn early in the show that the professor (or rather a professor), who elicits Nations' first display of raw (if unconsummated) violence, has been filling his wife's head full of ideas; in other words, his wife has been intellectually seduced. The absurdity of her seducer's charm is made evident in the scene involving her fellow students, when the latter (callow youths to a man) indulge in sophomoric discussion of one of the oldest of philosophical chestnuts, only to have the triviality of their preoccupations pointed up by contrast as Nations relates with brutal simplicity the horror of the events he has witnessed that day. This is a very strongly played scene: a confrontation between <sup>the cop's</sup> commitment and <sup>the students'</sup> superficial verbal cleverness, which Nations finds both baffling and despicable; he is unable to play the game but he is able to reject it. His anger towards his wife, and his certitude that she, unlike himself, is being taken in, shines through in this scene. Several times she tries to make him

understand what they are talking about; each time, he insists that he understands the question but thinks it irrelevant.

Desperate to talk, he pours out his ideas to the willing ears of the bargirl, Marge. His wife perceives a man who is "distant, cold, and angry", yet he touches her with tenderness while she sleeps. Following her interview with the psychiatrist (which Nations again implicitly rejects as irrelevant), she finds she can no longer wait for him to change, and she leaves.

These scenes taken together suggest the intensity of the conflict within Nations: he is both wife-stealer and wife-loser, both aggressor against women in anonymous contexts, and punisher of such aggressors. By performing an act of raw retribution against a wife aggressor, hence "protecting" the institution of the family, he alienates his own wife and hence loses a family. In punishing another, he punishes himself. In one sense, at least, the man he kills is himself.

It is evident in this show that the superficial displays of violence, which are very striking, mirror the violence of the conflict raging within the man. I think it is also true that the violence of the conflict occurring within the man also reflects deep conflicts within society, conflicts about professional responsibilities, about male-female relationships, and about the role of women within the family context.

Following the principle enunciated by Levi-Strauss that the meaning of one myth often is best seen in its context.



of other myths, let us examine certain parallelisms between Kojak and Police Story.

First, let us compare Lorelei of Kojak and Nations' wife, Barbara, of Police Story.

Table 4

A Comparison of Lorelei and Nations' wife, Barbara

Lorelei	Barbara
1. Has divorced her husband	1. Walks out on her husband
2. Aspires to a career	2. Aspires to an education
3. Is exploited by males	3. Is "exploited" by males (in having her head filled with ideas)
4. Is rescued by police (and collapses gratefully into Kojak's arms)	4. Rejects police rationale (as explained by psychiatrist) and turns her back on her policeman husband

We have only to suppose that Lorelei is an older version of Barbara, or at least at a different stage of her life, to read the message: both Lorelei and Barbara have been seduced by false goals, and have made themselves vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous male operators.

On one level, it may be argued that this is a message about women's liberation, and while this is a defensible thesis,

I think it is at best a partial explanation. The conflict over values is more profound than a question of male-female relations, although the latter is very much involved and makes a dramatically effective means of conveying the mythological dilemma. Before considering what I believe to be the more fundamental issues involved, we shall look at a number of other shows in the next section.

Meantime, we end this section by a very brief consideration of one episode of Adam-12, which gives a very different vision of the role of a policeman's wife, and the family life of a policeman.

Adam-12

Broadcast on Global, May 20, 1976, at 6:30 p.m.

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Résumé of story

The show begins with two intertwined themes: First a patrol car pulls up, Frankie the drunk (a many-time loser) is taken from the car, and greeted sarcastically by the Sergeant. Shortly afterwards, he is released. At the same time, we listen via police radio to the chase of a hit-and-run driver. The end of the pursuit occurs when the police car crashes. The two policemen involved are hospitalized. In the locker room, the heroes of Adam-12, two young clean-cut patrolmen, comment on the two scenes: The suspect gets off light, the cop gets hurt.

At the home of Jeannie, wife of one of the cops, a girlfriend (blind date) has been invited by the wife in the hopes of entrapping bachelor Pete. There is talk about the accident: one of the policemen involved is on the critical list. The men exit, and the two women discuss them: "He's nice" says the invited girlfriend. "That's all, just nice?" says the wife teasingly. The single girl asks what it's like to be married to a cop. The wife talks about the routine, financial difficulties, "But," she says, "I'm happy!"

In the garage, the two men talk about fixing up a truck. "What do you think about Ruthie?" Pete is asked. "She's looking for a husband," he says. "99% are," says his partner. They are interrupted by the woman next door looking for her son, Tim, who is, she adds, a "great mechanic".

Back in the living room, Pete is handed the baby, whose godfather he is. There is good-natured teasing, more discussion of the wounded policeman, Chavez, in the hospital. Pete and the girl are left alone to talk. They should not talk too much about the men in hospital: "Jean worries enough." "Jean is settled and happy," says Ruthie. "Because she married a policeman," says Pete. After a phone call to the hospital: "No change."

Tim (about 16 or 17) enters apparently drunk, shouting "He's going to get me!", but Pete quickly diagnoses his problem as drugs: "He's not drunk; it's pills." Tim worries about his mother climbing the walls. "Don't tell her," he says. Pete looks at his arms, into his pockets. Tim's father is called, and the situation is explained. There was a party Tim was given a barbiturate, probably Seconal -- "red devils". The location of the party is ascertained.

There is a noise in the garage. An intruder, Skad, throws a wrench at the two cops but is quickly overpowered. He is put under arrest. Tim confirms that he was at the party. Pills are removed from his pocket. "I was looking for Junior,"

he says. "He was going to kill me," says Tim. The appropriate division of police is called. "What are you going to tell your mother?" Tim is asked.

After the excitement, the two couples talk about the events, generalizing to a discussion of what is happening in the streets. The phone rings: Chavez is dead; the Jazz Festival is getting out of hand; the patrolmen have to get back to work; on the way, they will drop off Jeannie at the hospital so that she can be of some comfort to Chavez' wife; Ruthie is left to babysit.

#### An Interpretation of the Adam-12 Episode

I do not intend to make any analysis of the plot of this episode of Adam-12, which in any case is fragmentary. I wish only to point out certain parallels: like Nations and Hawkins, Pete and his partner are young and clean-cut in appearance, and are completely devoted to their jobs. In their world, also, crime is largely anonymous: a hit-and-run driver, a nameless illegal drug-pedlar at a party, a jazz festival "getting out of hand".

A good third of the show is taken up with the role of the policeman's wife. Jeannie, unlike Barbara, "is happy". Her life is simple, and to all appearances, bounded completely by the preoccupations of her family. Her husband is devoted



to her. She accepts the responsibility of her position, comforting Chavez' wife when the latter is killed. In her world, women are protected: Tim is not sent home to his mother until his problem has been resolved.

One is made happy, it seems, by the acceptance of limitations.

What the limitations are is the subject of the next section.

SECTION III

OF VIOLATION, MEDIATION,  
AND BUREAUCRATIZATION

## Introduction

In this section we consider the question of mediation. Following the same procedure as before, we describe the plot outlines of two shows, Starsky and Hutch and Baretta, and analyze them in detail while developing the key concepts of this section. We then analyze five other shows: two episodes of Police Woman, and one each of Streets of San Francisco, Mannix and Barnaby Jones. The section concludes with some general remarks about the messages conveyed by the programs.

Starsky and Hutch

Broadcast on ABC (June 23, 1976 at 10:00 p.m.) and  
CHCH-Ind. (June 19, 1976 at 9:00 p.m.)

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Résumé of story

1. The show opens with an exterior shot of a fairly new office building. We cut to an interior office with many desks. The setting is quite bare. Starsky and Hutch enter with someone, who turns out to be a mute, Larry. Hutch is looking embarrassed trying to conduct the interview: "Please don't cry," he says. The captain enters and pours scorn on Hutch, "Busted for stealing candy," he snorts. The mute has been arrested three times. Father Ignatius enters, and claims Larry as his parolee. He chastises the policemen, who withdraw the charges, and appear embarrassed. We are introduced to Larry's friend, and Father Ignatius' charge, R.C., who has lost speech and hearing because of a beating suffered at the hands of a policeman's billy. He has "not been too thrilled with cops ever since," says Father Ignatius. Hutch is given an amused look by his partner.

2. The camera pans to an exterior shot of a large building. Inside a masked man, smoking a cigar, is working to open a safe. Cut to watchman entering elevator. The safe

blows, and the masked man enters the vault. He is seen by the guard through the window, who sounds the alarm. We cut to Starsky and Hutch ordering food. Learning that there is a robbery in progress, they exit without eating. (This is part of a standard joke routine in Starsky and Hutch: the former is always hungry and never has time to complete the huge meal he has ordered.) The guard, holding a gun, orders the thief to come out, and then enters the room with the safe where he is shot. Robber exits hastily, as Starsky and Hutch race up in their patrol car, sirens screaming. A bullet from the fleeing robber narrowly misses them. "That makes me mad," says Hutch. "He missed, didn't he," retorts Starsky. There is then a very active chase through the streets, with music and sound effects. The cops enter a dark building, climb stairs. "Hold it," they shout, and the lights come on to reveal Larry cuddling some cats. The robber has escaped.

3. The scene opens in the chapel of Halfway House. Starsky and Hutch interview Father Ignatius, and his housemaid Jessie, revealing that they suspect the robbery to have been carried out by someone there. Father Ignatius is indignant. He comments on "tinhorn cops", rousting around. Jessie explains that he has been working night and day, and that he is tired and irritable. Jessie promises to check on Larry. She tells them, "For fuzz, you're all right", and makes a crack about Hutch's "Paul Muni look".



4. In the office of Father Ignatius, the police having left, the "Father" is revealed as a villain. "Magnificent performance," he boasts to his accomplice, Kim, and lights up a cigar. Now he says, if the police are looking for a safecracker, "we will have to give them one".

5. In the police station, Starsky begins to eat but is interrupted by the Captain who suspects Larry and orders Starsky and Hutch off to interview his old cellmate, Bettlinger. The captain then eats Starsky's sandwich.

6. In the cocktail bar, the barman, Bettlinger, is called to the phone by Father Ignatius. He leaves hastily; Starsky and Hutch follow (leaving a meal uneaten). At the Halfway House, the barman enters, watched by the cops. "Paydirt", they gloat. The barman was a friend and cellmate of Larry. There is a shot, and the barman is dead. A car disappears, presumably carrying a culprit. A chocolate wrapper is discovered beside the body. (Remember that Larry is a thrice-convicted chocolate thief.)

7. Starsky and Hutch talk to Father Ignatius, explain that Herman Bettlinger seems to have been mixed up in the crime. The ex-partner of Larry Horvath had run into the mission. Father Ignatius lets it be known that Larry has gone. The cops leave; the "Father" smiles with self-satisfaction. It then turns out that Larry has been in the mission all the time. The "Father" explains to him, "just like I told you," that it is not safe to hide here anymore. He must leave.

He goes on to say that the police don't like R.C., and they mean to use him. The "Father" tells Larry he must trust him. "Do you have your gun?" he asks. Kim will drive him to town; everything will work out for the best.

8. In the print shop, Starsky and Hutch talk to R.C. and learn that Larry is not there. He seems to have run away.

9. The police captain has decided on the guilt of Larry. Starsky and Hutch plead for him. The captain points out that his disappearance is "almost a confession". He means to send out an APB on Larry, who is "armed and dangerous". Intercut with this scene are shots of poor lovable Larry, upset, and hurrying through the streets.

10. Back at the printer's shop, R.C., although initially hostile, begins to understand the situation. Starsky and Hutch say someone frightened Larry to make him run. He is not guilty. R.C. calls Larry his only friend. They must work together to save his life, Starsky and Hutch reason. R.C. knows all his hangouts. They must find him before other policemen.

11. The threesome are shown going from one possible location to another, always frustrated. They have failed; they are discouraged. Then Starsky has an idea.

12. Kim returns to report to the "Father" that Larry is

watching a cowboy movie. The "Father" decides it is now time to "finish him off".

13. We find the group at a restaurant, with Starsky ordering. Why did Larry run? Who convinced him? Someone who had access to prison records. A thought crosses the face of R.C. They leave.

14. An inquiry reveals that the real Father Ignatius is 71 years old, impossible for the youngish man at Halfway House. The "Father's" assistant, Kim, is subdued in a violent scene.

15. Larry is watching the movie in great contentment. The false priest enters. Cut to a racing police car carrying Starsky and Hutch to the rescue. The "priest" stalks Larry, and sits down beside him. He asks Larry to come outside, but Larry refuses because he does not want to miss the action on the screen. After several such attempts, the "Father" pulls a gun on Larry who looks shocked. At this moment the police enter, and the "Father" tries to exit by the back. The movie house empties, and the police and the villain stalk each other through the empty ranks of movie seats. Suddenly at the end of a row of seats, both cops suddenly appear into the two adjoining ranks and the "Father" is captured. "Will Pat O'Brien ever forgive us?" the heroes are heard to say.

Baretta"Set-up City"

Broadcast on ABC, May 19, 1976, at 9:00 p.m.

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Résumé of story

1. The show opens with an exterior shot of what appears to be an old warehouse. Darkness and suspenseful music. Inside a group of men are opening a safe. "How're we doin'," growls one. "Five minutes." "Take your time." There is a noise of an approaching watchman. "Let's split," says the man opening the safe, sounding panicky. "Jes keep workin'" snarls his companion. There is an exchange of shots with the watchman, and then an explosion. One of the men roars in anger. The safe-opener says, "My leg, I can't move". "We gotta get outta here".

2. In the poolroom, Baretta is playing pool with an elderly man, Jake Hatch. A punk kid is telling about the knocking over of the vault, blowing up the safe, etc., in some excitement. Jake "wouldn't know anything about it?" asks Baretta. Jake proves to be an ex-con sent up for 10 years by Baretta for safe-cracking. "Don't do me no favors, Baretta," says Jake. The punk is full of admiration for Jake, and obviously aspires to follow his lead. Baretta needles Jake about the big house.

3. In the police headquarters, the lieutenant is angry. He needs answers: three jewellery heists, a hundred thousand in stolen gems, not a lead. He chews out his men with some vigor. Baretta accompanies him into his private office, where there follows an argument about Jake. The lieutenant wants to move on Jake; Baretta argues that pros killed the night watchman. Baretta and the lieutenant shout at each other.

4. Back in the poolroom, Baretta and Jake continue their never-ending game, with Baretta always ahead. They continue to talk in a semi-argumentative, semi-friendly fashion, about the crime and about how Jake was sent to prison.

5. In a boarding room, the wounded thief is in intense pain. One of the other thieves wants to send for a doctor, and the main leader promises to get him one. The other crook, Angio, whose father was a druggist, is detailed to "take the hurt away". The leader Joe has no intention of calling a doctor; he takes a drink and looks at gems in a case. "Joe," says the other, "he's real bad, he needs surgery." Joe snarls "You can nursemaid him if you want to; if he hadn't panicked it wouldn't have blown up."

6. Baretta is passing the word around. He has his shoes shined by a black man. After exchanging banter about ozone and other weighty matters, Baretta warns him about fencing. "Nobody."



"Dry up or..." Other similar scenes follow, as Baretta walks through the neighborhood, laying it on, spreading the word:

"Don't buy!"

7. Baretta is back in the poolroom with Jake playing and talking.

8. Joe, the brutal chief thief, is seen in a used car lot where he at first pretends interest in buying a car. He then offers jewels for sale, but the fat car salesman (whom we have seen Baretta visiting earlier) says he is not interested. Joe shoves him up against a wall, and hits him in the stomach. "Wazza matter?" he snarls, "Izza town drying up?" "The word is out," says the salesman. "Tell me about it!" "A cop, named Baretta." As the beating continues, the salesman informs Joe that Jake Hatch is looking for him.

9. In the poolhall, Baretta and Jake are playing pool.

10. Back in the crooks' hideout, Joe is cursing the "girl scouts" he has met. "Watta we stink, or something? Until we lose Baretta we're dead." The incompetent safecracker in the next room is now dead. Get rid of him, says Joe. We gotta leave this city.

11. In the poolhall, Hatch is told by the punk that there

is a phone call for him from Joe Denis. We hear Joe ask him if he is busy. "Depends," says Jake. There is a proposition; a rendez-vous is fixed.

12. In the car, Jake meets the thieves. There is a tough-sounding exchange, and then Joe asserts that he is onto "a big job," "no nickels and dimes." You're either with us or against us, Jake is told. "I'm your ticket out of town," Jake replies, because "I can take care of Baretta." He demands the dead safecracker's share, plus a half of the upcoming take.

13. Jake is seen in a drug store buying chemicals. In an exchange with a woman customer, Jake displays an extraordinary knowledge of chemistry.

14. Joe Denis is shown driving up to a bungalow. He carries a body into the bungalow, then leaves. In a minute, the bungalow explodes.

15. There is another fierce argument between Baretta and the lieutenant. The policeman tailing Jake lost him, after the latter bought iron oxide, aluminum powder, etc. Baretta leaves the lieutenant's room in a fury.

16. Back in the poolhall, Baretta is leaning on Jake. "Watta ya say, Jake, what does a guy do with a couple of pounds of iron oxide, some aluminum powder, etc?" "He might make a

bomb," says Jake. "You're skating close to the edge," Baretta warns. They talk about Phillips (the dead safecracker) and the building that blew up. "The law of averages caught up," says Jake. "Well," says Baretta, "that means there's an empty chair at the table. Maybe it's not such a good idea to be so close to the action." "It's the only way to win," says Jake. "Put me next to the man," says Baretta. "He snuffed a couple of people. I can work for you or against you," he says, "it's my game." "Smart kid," Jake says of Baretta, à propos the pool game, "you think he's gonna let you win until all the marbles are on the line, and then..."

17. Baretta at home is talking to his lieutenant: "Hi, boss," he says. He advises him to sit tight. (During this interview, Jake's supposed tail is actually sitting in the room.) "The wizard is at work," says Baretta. Baretta then counsels the young cop on how to play "with the big boys." "Don't worry how tough they are. Just don't let them know how scared you are."

18. Hatch and Joe plan a demonstration of the former's prowess. Hatch calls Baretta, asks him if he wants the goods, gives him an address, and then rejoins Joe in the car watching the house, which is a set-up wired with explosives.

19. Baretta pulls up in a car, watched by the three crooks.

Joe comments that he "looks ordinary". He doesn't look like a superman. Baretta climbs the stairs, gun in hand, enters, looks and sees a giveaway clue that explosives are present. As he dives, Hatch detonates the remote-controlled bomb. The kitchen window explodes outwards, and the crooks drive away.

20. Back in the poolroom, Hatch enters to find Baretta in disguise. "Heard ya got blown up," says Hatch chattily. "The cops are looking for you," says Baretta. "You almost blew me up, you chump," says Baretta. "Where'd you hide," asks Hatch, having established that he deliberately left a giveaway clue. "Under the table. You sure blew that place up," says Baretta in admiration. "Yeah, I'm the best there is," says Hatch. "Ever wonder why we do this," asks Baretta. "How do we get into it. Guess folks like you and me, we paid the money and drew our card a long time ago. Ain't got no more choice." "You're skating a thin line, you know," says Baretta. Hatch exits as a cop enters.

21. Hatch buys more explosives in the same drugstore.

22. The lieutenant is shouting: The game is over. No game; no set-up. I don't think you see, sir, says Baretta patiently. I'm protecting the integrity of the department, says the lieutenant. They shout at each other. "Jake has a 10-year old daughter. You're trying to nail him for something he

didn't do," argues Baretta. It will be Baretta's funeral. "I'm doing my job," says Baretta. "Stop thinking only of yourself," he says to the lieutenant.

23. The three thieves are in a room where Jake has prepared the nitro, and holds it in a small vial. Baretta is climbing outside, and leaps in the window. Guns are pulled. Joe says, Gimme the suitcase. Jake threatens to drop the nitro. After a good deal of harsh talk, the villains are subdued. Jake will get the 10% insurance money. The bottle actually held colored water. Jake will have enough for a one0way ticket to Venezuela, with his little girl.

24. In the poolhall, the punk kid announces he has ambitions. "Tell him what a big man is," says Baretta. "See you, Baretta," says Jake. "Hope not," says Baretta. "Me too," says Jake. "O.K.," says Baretta to the kid, "we're gonna play five games and every time you lose I'm gonna hit you."



Starsky & Hutch and Baretta: An interpretation

Certain similarities in the plot line of the two shows may be observed:

Table 5

A Comparison of the Plot Lines of  
Starsky & Hutch and Baretta

Starsky & Hutch	Baretta
1. Robbery occurs (with explosion)	1. Robbery occurs (with explosion)
2. Guard enters (with drawn gun)	2. Guard enters (with drawn gun)
3. Robber shoots guard	3. Robber shoots guard
4. Robbers flee (with loot)	4. Robbers flee (with loot)
5. Police begin search	5. Police begin search
6. Robbers vanish (are hidden)	6. Robbers vanish (are hidden)
7. Ex-con falsely implicated	7. Ex-con falsely implicated
8. Heroes and ex-cons have special friendship relation	8. Hero and ex-con have special friendship relation
9. Ex-con is accused by police chief (heroes' superior)	9. Ex-con is accused by police chief (hero's superior)
10. There is a quarrel between heroes and police chief	10. There is a quarrel between hero and police chief
11. The ex-con is vindicated	11. The ex-con is vindicated
12. Search is ended: Robbers are caught	12. Search is ended: Robbers are caught

It will be observed that in each of the two shows considered here the initial crime (safe-robbing) takes the form of a violation of property rights. Comparing these episodes with three of the programs previously analyzed, we arrive at a preliminary classification of crimes, as follows:

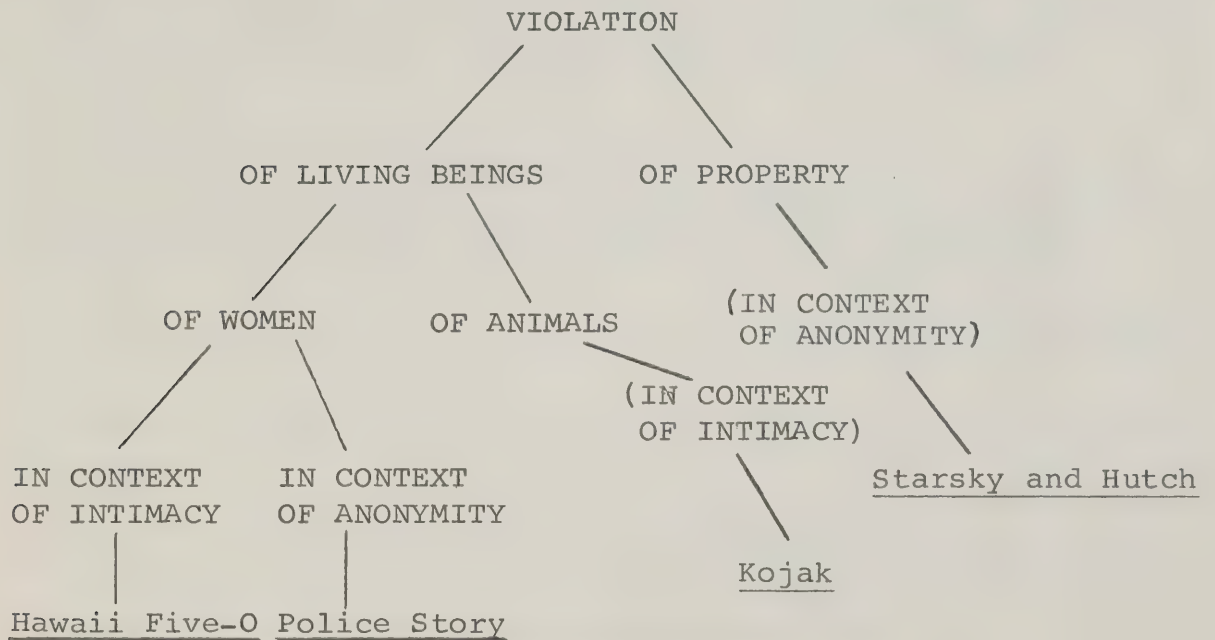


Figure 5 : A Classification of Crimes of Violation

At first glance, the theme of sexuality found in the shows considered earlier does not seem to appear here. However, "breaking and entering" is considered by some psychoanalysts to have strong sexual connotations; this assumption can be supported by superficial stylistic elements in the two

episodes: in each case, the act of entering the vault occurs in intimate darkness and the actual breakthrough into the vault is accompanied by an explosion (orgasm?).<sup>1</sup> It may be protested that such an interpretation is artificial, if not fanciful. However, the notion of an association between robbery and sexual violation is by no means original with me, as the following extract from a psychoanalytical interview attests (the analyst is identified as "L:"):

L:        'Let's return to the question of your stealing activities, Harold. Why did you take articles that didn't belong to you?'

Perhaps because I wanted to possess it?

L:        'And why did you want to possess it?'

Well--I--I--ever since I can remember--because--these things--my mother...Well, because ever since I can remember I wanted to possess--my--mother--more than anyone else...

L:        'Way back in your childhood you became definitely convinced that you could never surpass your father and possess your mother. Now, then, did you possess things after that?'

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<sup>1</sup>I am told by some people who have suffered burglaries that the resulting feeling of "violation" can be quite powerful, more than can be explained by the purely pragmatic consequences.

By stealing, by taking, as substitutes, things forbidden to you. Does this explain to you why you went alone when you broke into a house? Can you understand the symbolism?'

It symbolizes--walking through a door--having an intercourse. Now I see...I--I couldn't have anyone else go with me. That was one way to--possess--my mother...Now I see. I can see--all those things--what they mean. And it is right.

L: 'Obviously you couldn't get things merely by asking for them. There was only one way for you to possess your mother, which is in many respects a perfectly normal childhood desire. In that stage of a child's life, the child is jealous of the father, so jealous that he actually wants to get him out of the way, even to kill him....I wonder if this explains to you why you had intercourse with your sister?'

My sister--is close to my mother. I always had a sort of feeling that she--that she--was my mother....

(Extract from Rebel Without a Cause, pp. 274-275, the account of a hypnoanalysis of a criminal psychopath, by Robert M. Lindner.)

This quotation introduces not only a correlation between stealing and sexual behavior, but more specifically between stealing and incestuous sexual behavior. The analogy could be further supported by the fact that in both episodes (Starsky & Hutch, Baretta) a guard (authority figure or "father") is seen approaching carrying a gun, and is then killed by the thieves. The symbolism of the gun is one of the best known in depth psychology, and need not be repeated here.

In spite of this suggestive evidence, I do not wish to argue that the acts of violation of property rights portrayed in these two episodes are intended to stand for incest in the context of the show. To suppose so would contradict a fundamental premise of the methodology we have adopted to the effect that the meaning of a function is not fixed across stories but is revealed by its place within the bundles of relationship which the stories convey. In neither Starsky & Hutch nor Baretta (unlike Hawaii Five-O, Police Story or Kojak) does the sexual theme predominate explicitly, so that to imply meanings which are not supported by context would be equivalent to supposing that symbolisms are constant, which it seems to me is most unlikely. What I do think, however, is that sexual connotations are exploited by the



producers of the two shows; this is what I think gives to the robberies their sensational qualities. That is to say, the viewer is meant to feel the force of the initial violation of the social order even though the story line does not justify the incident. (Also, of course, a rationale for murder is created.)

Thus, themes of violation are the starting point for all five shows considered to this point (excluding Adam-12). As Figure 5 indicates, crimes of violation can be classified not only by the object of the crime (human, animal, inanimate) but also by the context in which it occurs (intimate, anonymous, belligerent). Some logical possibilities are not included in Figure 5, e.g. the violation of an animal in a context of intimacy constitutes bestiality; in a context of anonymity it may be viewed as slaughter; in a context of belligerency<sup>1</sup> it is thought of as hunting. Similarly, violation of property in wartime is socially responsible but is inadmissible in peacetime.

By this classification, Starsky & Hutch and Baretta would be grouped together with Police Story (since crimes occur in anonymous contexts) rather than with Hawaii Five-O and Kojak, where crimes occur in intimate contexts. This

<sup>1</sup>I use "belligerency" to refer to a context of warfare--the opposition of culturally identified groups involving the use of force in order to harm an enemy.

distinction leads to an interesting conclusion: in both Hawaii Five-O and Kojak, the police are not primary agents of authority, but secondary, in as much as they enter the story only after a social system has failed to regain a state of equilibrium through autonomous action, whereas in Police Story, Starsky & Hutch, and Baretta, the images of the society within which the crime occurs are extremely vague (a bit less so in Police Story where the father is encountered, although very briefly): in Starsky & Hutch and Baretta, the actual victims of the initial crime are never seen, the background of "Father Ignatius" and Joe Denis are unknown, and in fact the initial crime is hardly more than a pretext to motivate the entry of the police heroes.

I suspect that the distinction is related to the classification by Wright of movies into "classical" and "professional" plots. We shall return to consider this distinction shortly.

In Table 5, it was observed that Starsky & Hutch and Baretta resemble each other in the form of the initial crime (functions 1 to 6) and in the bundle of relationships involving one or more ex-cons (functions 7 to 11). Let us consider this matter of ex-cons in somewhat greater detail.

There are, broadly speaking, three forces in a crime story:

- 1) the forces of right (usually represented by the police),
- 2) the forces of wrong (robbers, murderers, etc.), and
- 3) the "mediators".

In both Starsky & Hutch and Baretta, ex-cons are employed in this "third force" role of mediators (an aptitude shared by ex-cons, members of minority groups, and women, as we shall see in the succeeding analysis). Let us examine what type of relationship holds between the three corners of this relational triangle.

In Starsky & Hutch, the relationship between the cops and Larry, one of the ex-cons, is established in the opening scene. Hutch is supposed to be "booking" Larry for a crime of stealing chocolates. Larry is presented as a big lumbering, harmless, lovable mute of very low intelligence, easily influenced, perfectly innocent and trusting. Hutch is shown to be embarrassed because he is obliged to treat Larry's "crime" as a serious offence, and if we had not caught this point, it is underlined heavily by the behavior of the captain and the remarks of Father Ignatius. In the next scene involving Larry he is shown awkwardly but good-naturedly fondling kittens, again emphasizing his purity, his "oddness" and his naivete.

The second ex-con in the story (the third appears only long enough to be shot), R.C., Larry's close friend,

is presented as also having a physical deficiency (he is a deaf-mute), but, unlike Larry, he is intelligent and begins the story as an avowed enemy of the police (having suffered the loss of his impaired faculties at their hand), although he is not any longer a criminal: the second time he appears it is in his "printing shop" which is the symbol of his return to honest employment.

If both ex-cons have disabilities, so in a sense do Starsky & Hutch. The show generally stays one step short of becoming an open burlesque of crime drama: Starsky & Hutch are portrayed as semi-comic characters, the butt of tricks played by their captain, individually characterized by their own foibles, wisecracking their way through improbable situations.

In a sense, the special relationship shared by Starsky & Hutch and the ex-cons is one of being misfits, or "stumblebums" in the case of the cops (but stumblebums who always come out on top). Secondly, their friendship is built on mutual appreciation of honesty (especially in the case of R.C. and the two cops).

The relationship of the cops to the robbers is a simple one of adversary.

The relationship of the robber to the mediator in Starsky & Hutch is one of apparent common interest (both have criminal backgrounds and at the beginning of the show both are at Halfway House) but in fact is one of victimization. The theme of victimization has already occurred in Kojak, and it is interesting to observe certain similarities in the plot lines of this latter show and Starsky & Hutch:

Table 6

A Comparison of the Plot Lines of  
Kojak and Starsky & Hutch

Kojak	Starsky & Hutch
1. There exists a witness whose death would remove vital evidence against murderer	1. There exists a scapegoat whose death would provide vital evidence in favor of robber-murderer (he would go scot-free)
2. Witness possesses a fatal weakness (stress)	2. Witness possesses a fatal weakness (naivete)
3. Murderer hides from witness (by skulking in doorways and by assuming false identity)	3. Robber-murderer "hides" from scapegoat (by assuming false identity)
4. Murder plays a trick on witness, which is intended to make the victim bring about her own downfall and eventual death	4. Robber-murderer plays a trick on scapegoat which is intended to make the victim bring about his own downfall and eventual death



Table 6 (Continued)

Kojak	Starsky & Hutch
5. Police after long search find positive evidence of motive and scene of crime	5. Police after long search find positive evidence of false identity of Father Ignatius
6. Murderer decides to kill witness	6. Robber-murderer decides to kill scapegoat
7. Police subdue and capture accomplice of murderer	7. Police subdue and capture accomplice of murderer
8. Accomplice reveals intentions of murderer and danger of witness	8. Accomplice reveals intentions of murder and danger of scapegoat
9. The witness is rescued	9. The scapegoat is rescued
10. The murderer is caught	10. The robber-murderer is caught

I do not want to exaggerate the similarities because apart from these elements Kojak and Starsky & Hutch develop in quite different ways. Nevertheless, it is striking to observe that a victimization theme in two different story contexts tends to produce a similar set of story functions.

Now let us see how the mediation of Starsky & Hutch takes place. When the program opens, it appears that Larry and R.C. are clearly in the adversary's camp: Larry is a willing dupe of the "Father" and R.C. is intensely hostile to

the police. The police are impotent to act, and the "father" berates them for their interference in his center. Furthermore, the lieutenant of police decides that Larry is guilty and sends out an "A.P.B.". Against this background, two events occur: 1) the "father" elects to victimize Larry by making a scapegoat of him, and 2) the cops, because of their affection for and special relationship with Larry, make friends with R.C. In this way, the cops are pulled toward the center (because of Starsky & Hutch's special bond with Larry, which contrasts with the lieutenant's attitude), and the crooks are pulled toward the center (by Larry's victimization and R.C.'s realization of the honesty and "goodness" of Starsky & Hutch). In this way, a synthesis of initially antagonistic elements is provided for: the true villains are put down--but so is the lieutenant (in the sense that he is shown to have been wrong).

From this analysis, it might be inferred that the third party mediator of a crime drama must have certain special characteristics; I am not yet sure I yet understand what these are, but it seems obvious that the male-female, sado-masochistic relationship of Kojak is no more accidental than the crook-ex-con schemer-naive relationship of Starsky & Hutch.

Before turning to Baretta, let us summarize briefly, in the form of a diagram, what seems to me to be the underlying pattern of Starsky & Hutch:

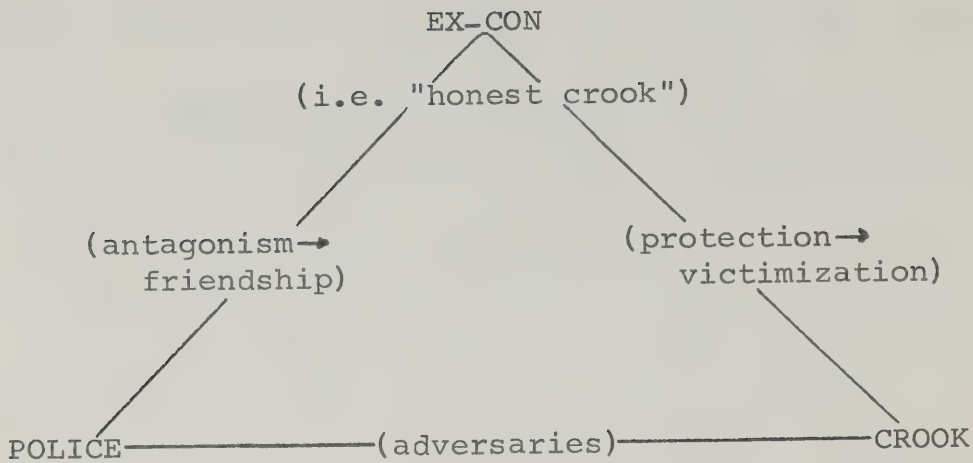


Figure 6 : The Base Structure of Starsky & Hutch

The relationship of ex-con, in this story, to the two adversaries is ambiguous: both Larry and R.C. are former criminals and in the story Larry steals (thus linking him with "Father Ignatius") but is intrinsically honest, as is R.C. (thus linking him with Starsky & Hutch). Dynamically, the attitudes pass from initial antagonism towards the police and trust in the crook to final friendliness towards the police and disillusionment with the crooks; similarly Larry is initially a "victim" of Hutch (who "books" him for his crime) and is protected by the crook, while later he becomes the victim of "Father Ignatius" and is protected by Starsky & Hutch.

In Baretta, the ex-con also plays the role of mediator, but here a fundamental inversion occurs.

First we note that the police-crook relationship remains one of simple adversaries (and is even less developed than in Starsky & Hutch). Secondly, it may be asserted that the relationship between Baretta and the ex-con Jake Hatch passes from initial hostility (Baretta having "sent him up" at an earlier period, and thus, as in the case of R.C. there is an earlier "wound" committed by the police against the ex-con) to grudging admiration and mutual respect to genuine affection at the end of the story.

However, while the bond between Starsky & Hutch and Larry Horvath is that of stumblebums to misfit, that which unites Baretta to Jake Hatch is more like that of Superman to Spiderman. It is made abundantly clear that Baretta is not like ordinary mortals; for example, his escape from the bomb trap, without visible sign of even minor injury, deserves to be enrolled in the Guinness Book of Records. Joe Denis watches him mount the stairs and makes indirect tribute to his reputation as a superman by commenting drily: "He looks ordinary." Numerous shots are included to make clear that in the underworld of pimps, informers, prostitutes, minor con men, etc., Baretta is accorded a respect verging on awe. Single-handed he closes down the town to the thief, leaving him no alternative except to take on Baretta directly (when he would have preferred to unload his booty and skip town).

If Baretta is a man with an exceptional talent, so is Jake. One scene is included (the drugstore scene) to show Jake's marvellous talent and knowledge of explosives (used for safecracking). "I'm the best there is," he says matter-of-factly, and Baretta does not disagree. He is absolutely cool under every situation involving danger shown in the programme; as he says, staying close to the action is the only way to win. Like Baretta he has learned that when you play with the big boys, you never let them see how scared you are. Baretta verbalizes the bond between Hatch and himself in the scene where he talks of how "folks like you and me . . . paid our money and drew our card a long time ago". The difference between them is that Baretta is on the side of the law while Jake wavers (being mainly motivated by concern for his daughter), and secondly, good as Jake is, he has to recognize in Baretta a superior talent (symbolized by the ongoing pool game).

Similarly, the relationship between Jake and the robber-murderer is different from that of Starsky & Hutch. There is no question of Jake's being victimized (thus differentiating him from his incompetent predecessor who is callously allowed to die by Joe); his talents are needed ("there's a place at the table," comments Baretta). Furthermore, he is the only one who can take care of Baretta



for Joe. Here the switch occurs: in the guise of setting an ambush for Baretta, Jake in fact sets up Joe, leading to his capture, and Jake's winning the reward money. The victim is not Jake, but Joe.

We will reserve discussion of the plot line of Baretta until after having looked at a somewhat similar plot in Police Woman. We conclude this part of the discussion by some general remarks.

Baretta is by far the most "macho" of the current crime drama series. Partly this is due to the personality of the actor who portrays him, but as we might infer from the preceding analysis, by no means uniquely. It is suggested by many devices that Baretta is very close to the world of crime which he polices. In no other show that I watched does the hero spend as much time walking the streets, interacting with the mixed world of petty criminals. Visually his connection to the urban street scene is well conveyed. It may be noted that the lieutenant in Baretta plays a similar role to the one in Starsky & Hutch (both falsely accuse the ex-con, for example), but in Baretta the conflicts between the lieutenant and himself are more intense. This makes Baretta more evidently accessible to the person who plays the role of mediator (in the sense of lessening psychological distance between police

and crook), and opens up possibilities for a more interesting range of plots.

One last comment. The episode of Baretta is the only one in my sample which comes close to what Wright calls the "professional plot". While Baretta does not clearly accept tasks for pay, in the sense of acting as a mercenary, his behavior is atypical of the television lawman, in that he turns a solution of a crime into a test of strength and wit. In Baretta's case, it is made to appear that his deliberate choice of putting himself on the same level as those whom he polices (playing in their poolrooms, walking their streets), is done to make the chase a matter of pure cool nerve and skill. This is the motivation of the professional.

Thus while in Wright's analysis the professional plot supposes a team of professionals, each with his individual specialty, and Baretta is a loner, the difference is perhaps less pronounced than one would imagine: the somewhat reluctant but affectionate relationship between Baretta and Jake Hatch perhaps is the professional association in embryo.

Police Woman (I):

"The Purge"

Broadcast on NBC (May 18, 1976, at 9:00 p.m.) and  
CHCH-Ind. (May 17, 1976, at 7:30 p.m.)

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Résumé of story line

1. The scene opens in a yard outside a large building. Billy is briefing a group of cops about a raid on a receiver of stolen goods. He outlines details of the ambush, which is to follow the arrival of a tractor trailer as it enters the warehouse. "Hit 'em hard", he says, "They're all armed. Let's go."
  
2. The big truck enters the warehouse watched from hiding by the police force. "Everybody set? Let's go." Cut to the interior where the truck is parking surrounded by a group of men. "Police!" calls Billy, his gun pointing, "Hold it. Don't move." The men offer no resistance, raise their hands. Police examine the contents of the truck, which is empty. "Dry run?" "Yep." The leader of the group, Bastry, asks to see a warrant. Royster waves it in front of him: "Read but don't touch." Suddenly a door opens at the rear and a man flees. Billy follows, hears the noise of a toilet

flushing and approaches. Figure flees through door into dark room, which Billy enters. Billy is suddenly hit violently and knocked down; after a second or so, he springs back, apparently managing to hit his assailant. The lights go on; other police appear; the "attacker" turns out to be "only a kid", and is dead.

3. We find Billy (played by Earl Holliman) talking about the incident: "Fifteen years old!" he says (the boy killed by Billy turns out to be a nephew of Bastry who was living with him), "I didn't have a fight with a boy!" A friend of his calls Pepper to ask "How's Billy doing?". Billy is all broken up. "Don't lose your cool; they can be pretty rough."

4. An interview follows with officers from homicide. There is a question as to whether Billy will be charged with manslaughter. There follows an argument. "I'm the heavy," Billy complains. "We only investigate," reply the others.

5. Styles, one of the cops on Billy's team, comes to talk to him.

6. Pepper and Billy are in a bar. Billy is given a cheerful greeting by some cops. Billy wonders: "We don't get along and they're wishing me luck." "They're cops," says Pepper "They know it can happen to anyone." The Department

is coming down on Billy; he has to "find that guy" (the phantom assailant in the warehouse fight). Pepper argues that there are lots of people to do it for Billy, but Billy feels he must show them. Pepper consoles by saying that the tragedy was an accident. "I have to get that guy," repeats Billy, "I have to move in on Bastry."

7. Pepper conducts an interview with an imprisoned convict, Eddie. She offers a deal: they will help him get out if he helps to catch Bastry. The con says he got information from a "friend", whom he can't involve. Pepper says: "We've got to talk to your friend." Finally the con agrees: "Okay, but I sure hope your word is better than mine."

8. Eddie's friend, Melvin, is interviewed on a wharf. He admits: "We were partners; we're close." (They are both con artists.) He is at first reluctant to become involved in catching Bastry and his gang: "It's their hustle; it's none of my business."

Finally he accedes: "Maybe, I only owe Eddie." A deal is struck. He talks about a hustle he pulled once in Nevada: "It was a hell of a move; maybe I could work it again." The deal is struck. Eddie's prison term may be reduced if Melvin co-operates with the police.

9. Bastry's assistant (Billy's real assailant) expresses sorrow for the nephew. Bastry dismisses him: "He panicked, ran. Cut the garbage; I hardly knew him." It is revealed that the first truck is a dummy; the second has the goods. He needs a licence: "If I didn't need your licence," snarls



Bastry at his co-conspirator, "I'd cut you out. You're running scared."

10. Pepper and Billy see a headline: "Cop error kills". Billy flinches.

11. The next scene passes in the Huntley House Hotel, in a luxurious apartment. Bastry and the conman, Eddie's partner meet. The latter introduces himself as Melvin Brooks. After some preliminary sparring, Brooks says "Mr. Bastry, I know you're a fence. I commend you for the way you turned the tables on the cops." Brooks then pulls a gun and points it at Bastry. "I have a business proposition," he says, and orders Bastry to sit down, explaining the gun is just a pacifier, and that he means only to talk business. "I have an operation in San Diego. I deal in hot cigarettes." Bastry denies he knows what Brooks is talking about. "We're going to make a lot of money together," says Brooks. "Have me checked out." There is a first mention of ten grand's worth of cigarettes, and Brooks offers his business card. "Drop it on the table on the way out," says Bastry.

12. Bastry has his partner check out Brooks. "Let the cops do our work for us," he says with a sneer.

13. In the car, Bastry, whistling, sees his tail (Billy).

He suddenly backs up and crashes into Billy. He gets out, shouting that Billy was trying to kill him. He intends to file a report.

14. Billy is officially suspended from the force, in a tense interview with his superior. He is not to go near Bastry. "Don't I have any rights," asks Billy, "Criminals get tried in courts, cops in the newspapers." He hands over his gun, badge, and ID card. To Pepper he says bitterly, "You're the only real cop."

15. The con artist reports to Pepper that he has made contact, and that Bastry has had him checked out, has gone into his past. Now he advises they mustn't lean on him, otherwise he could back out. "You're a good cop," he says, "I'm a good con man. It's my ballpark. Wait." We need some money, he adds, because he has promised to finance. \$10,000, minimum. Pepper protests: "You don't know what I have to go through." She promises to try.

16. Billy and Pepper argue about the former's stakeout of Bastry. "Don't be big sister," he says. He doesn't care about the rules. "Sitting here is adding to your grief," says Pepper, "People care about you..... They care, Billy! They don't know how to show it, but they care and you know it." I've

just got to do something," says Billy. "Just wait," says Pepper.

17. Pepper asks the lieutenant to raise the money. He would have to go right to the top. They're plotting a frame. It would leave the Department open to a lot of criticism. The Department is not human; Billy Crowley is a human. Doesn't the Department owe him something, after 18 years of breaking his back, giving when no one would. It's not a one-way street: he needs support. The lieutenant agrees to try, even though it's his neck on the line. "We have to get it," pleads Pepper, "We owe Billy the chance." "Okay," says the lieutenant.

18. Pepper meets the conman in a church: "The money's waiting; I'm waiting; Crowley's waiting." It should be next week, according to the con man. He asks for a grand in advance, and then sets up a rendez-vous for the raid. "Get your people set." The first truck doesn't mean anything. Watch for the spotter.

19. Now there is difficulty with the judge who refuses an application for a search warrant. "Did you think I'd sign?" he says to the lieutenant. He is afraid of publicity. Poor judgment: no judge will sign the warrant, in the present climate of public opinion.

20. Pepper is in despair. "I've blown it . . . Why do I know everything."

21. Billy at home talking to his friends, Pepper, Royster and Styles. "If only I could get my hands on the judge," he says. The only possible answer is an undercover cop. One of the men, Styles, is unknown to the crooks.

22. Pepper has the task of selling the idea to the con man. "You're a real cute broad," he says, "Who's conning whom?" He's not sure he can pull it off. He's been pulling in the string slow; now it's time to give it a yank. However to bring in the extra man will take more money, and charm. The con man has added eight grand, Pepper throws in two grand of her own. The two joke together.

23. The con man meets Bastry on the wharf. He introduces the idea of his own man (the undercover man, in reality). He proceeds to up the ante from ten grand to eighteen or eighteen five. But he says: "My man stays in." "That's different," says Bastry, "He can help with the extra unloading."

24. Pepper and Billy watch the truck enter the warehouse. "No problems; I left the driver tied up." The truck is opened and unloading commences. As the exchange of money and cigarettes is completed, the undercover man Styles makes his move. "You set me up," shouts Bastry at "Brooks", as the

sound of screaming sirens is heard. "Put the money in a safe place," says the con man.

25. The spotter has been observed by Billy, and is trapped. "You're the guy who came at me in the warehouse that night," he says. "It was an accident, I was scared," says the panicky crook.

26. There is a celebration scene with the con man, and Billy's friends. Pepper and Billy drift off to talk alone. "Let me lay a little truth on you," says Billy. "Everything looked tragic. I forgot. I saw my career going down the drain. I was caught up in survival. Now with everybody's help, I have my badge back. Everything's the same, but not really, never again." They exchange tender looks.

#### Police Woman (I): An Interpretation

First let us consider the initial sequence of events.



Table 7

## Initial Events of Police Woman (I)

- 
1. Bastry commits a robbery (hijacking)
  2. The police intervene
  3. Bastry tricks the police and escapes by hiding the evidence (i.e., the first truck is always empty)
  4. Bastry's accomplice assaults police hero (Billy) and Bastry's own nephew is killed
  5. The assaulter flees
  6. The assaulter is hidden
  7. Billy is falsely blamed for the crime of murder
  8. Billy tries to "crowd" Bastry
  9. Bastry tricks Billy by manufacturing false evidence (the spurious accident)
  10. Billy is falsely blamed for the crime of assault and intimidation
  11. Billy is suspended from the police force
  12. Billy is the scapegoat
  13. Pepper and the other policemen still believe in Billy's innocence
- 

As in the two shows just analyzed, Police Woman (I) begins with a robbery (although the surface representation of details of the robbery is quite different from the two

previous shows). The police intervene hoping to catch the robbers red-handed, but, by a clever trick, the evidence has been hidden. (It will be recalled from the discussion of the previous section that in general the dramatist has two options following an initial crime: either to "hide" the criminal, in which case the story concerns a search for the hidden criminal, or his real identity, as in *Police Story*, *Baretta*, and *Starsky & Hutch*, or to hide the evidence, in which case the search concerns the discovery of clues, which will establish the guilt of the criminal beyond reasonable doubt, as in *Kojak*.)

In *Police Woman (I)*, the initial crime is quickly followed by a second, murder (following the seemingly invariant TV crime drama rule that an initial violation of social order is followed by a murder: in every American crime drama in my sample except the fragmentary *Adam-12*, this combination occurs, and even in the latter, the drug peddler has pursued the young neighbour boy, intending to kill him). In *Police Woman (I)* it is the culprit who disappears. As a result of his disappearance, a scapegoat situation is created, as in *Starsky & Hutch*, only in the present instance the victim is Billy, one of the police heroes in the episode. Instead of a "reforming crook" (Larry), we have an "erring cop" ("Cop Error Kills", screams the headline).

Now let us consider the second major thematic sequence:

Table 8

Secondary Sequence of Events: Police Woman (I)

- 
- 
1. Pepper makes a deal with con artists: release of Eddie the con man from prison for the tricking of Bastry
  2. Melvin the con man meets Bastry and offers to buy stolen goods
  3. Bastry, suspicious, has Melvin investigated and is satisfied that he is a bona fide crook
  4. Con man waits like a spider for fly to enter web
  5. Pepper persuades lieutenant to "go to top" in order to get money to pull off deal
  6. The Department provides the money
  7. The judge (because of fear of bad publicity) refuses the search warrant
  8. An "undercover man" trick is devised
  9. Bastry agrees to the deal
  10. Bastry is captured by the undercover man; the real killer is caught by Billy; Billy is vindicated
- 

If Police Woman (I) resembles Starsky & Hutch in introducing a scapegoat (although an inversion occurs: [ex-con = scapegoat] to [cop = scapegoat]), it is clearly parallel to Baretta in the use of the "honest crook" trickery theme. As

in Baretta, Pepper the Police Woman succeeds in manipulating an honest crook; as in Baretta, there is a mutual feeling of respect ("you're a good cop; I'm a good con man"); as in Baretta, the plan is accepted by the crook (in one case because of Jake's "demonstration"; in the other case, by Brooks' being "checked out"); as in Baretta, the crook leads the cops to the crook's hideout. The difference is that in one case it is the cop who is vindicated, in the other it is the ex-con. In both cases, an essential role of mediation is played by the ambiguous figure of the ex-con.

In spite of these parallelisms, the episode of Police Woman analyzed here does not fall into the class of "professional" plots, as defined by Wright, or rather it is probably a hybrid. The critical element missing is the sense of independence from society. Baretta "skates close to the line", in that he seems minimally (for a cop) attached to society and to the ambient values of society and maximally (for a cop) integrated to the society which he polices. The heroes of Police Woman remain strongly middle-class in their apparent attachments and values (and often are heard to complain that police are not accepted by society, or at least not given sufficient credit by society).

Let us now consider a further episode in which the scapegoat theme occurs: Police Woman (II).

Police Woman (II):

"Incident in Black and White"

Broadcast on NBC, June 15, 1976, at 9:00 p.m.

Résumé of story

1. The show opens in a patrol car. The cops are discussing attitudes: "Ever get the feeling that not everyone in the world loves cops?" "Partner, you're strung out like a goat," replies the other. The scene shifts to an outdoor restaurant, with several cops present. The "strung-out" one meets his girlfriend, whom he is to marry the following day. There is a good deal of friendly teasing.

2. Violent gang fight in a park. Police cars arrive and enter the fight. A policeman, the betrothed, is shot. More police cars arrive. The girlfriend, who is a policewoman, sobs desperately, "Oh, no!"

3. At the police station, it is reported that a Mexican youth aged 18 or 19 was observed to have a hand gun, and ran off. The gun was a chrome '22. A brief description of the youth follows.

4. Pepper and Billy talk to the stricken girlfriend. She is in shock with grief. Pepper offers to take her home.



Throughout the scene it is Pepper who plays the role of comforter.

5. The police have found a fingerprint.

6. The "Mexican" kid is talking to his girlfriend. The boy had been right there when the policeman was killed. Who killed him? "It could have been anyone." "Could the cops know you were there?" "Yes." The girl insists he should go to the police. "You're crazy," he says. Why, she asks, did he have a gun? Because some of the "Flockers" (the other gang) had weapons. He pleads with her to hide the gun where his mother will not find it.

7. The next scene takes place in a kind of small auditorium. George Buckles, the new head of the police section, is giving a speech. It is full of phrases such as "command", "task force", etc. Pepper arrives late, (having been occupied with the grieving girlfriend) and is severely reprimanded by Buckles. Buckles intends to tolerate no breaches of discipline. He insists on perfect punctiliousness on the part of his officers. He intends to put a stop to gang violence. He proposes to set up an "investigative group", and a "patrol group". "I want my men," he says, "looking sharp." Two of the regular stars of Police Woman, Royster and Styles, affect a flamboyant style of dress (part of their

"undercover" role). Buckles says sarcastically to them that "you can't tell the cops from the crooks". This entire scene is played broadly, verging on a burlesque of military drill, and is shown to elicit skepticism from the men (amused and unbelieving glances). "This guy's really beautiful," Billy comments as they leave.

8. The police now have an ID on Bobby Romero, the "Mexican" kid.

9. Billy is scornful of Buckles: "He doesn't know how to tell a case when he sees one," he says to Pepper. The latter reports that the girlfriend "wants out" of the police force. There is more discussion of the role of the police: "Cops keep the wolves from devouring the sheep," says Billy.

10. Back at the playground, the police face a hostile crowd: "Leave us alone." Billy replies heatedly, "Don't you understand, it's your problem, we're protecting you." Finally, the crowd quiets, and just as the conversation turns to Bobby Romero, Reuben, the person to whom Billy is talking, is shot. Everyone runs, and horror is shown on the face of Pepper.

11. Tension builds up again. Against ominous music, the coroner's car arrives. "You people, what do you want?" says the crowd. "We want to know who's responsible," says Billy. "You are," says the crowd. Amidst sirens and flashing lights,

other police cars arrive, including Buckles, who says, "I'm in charge here, I give the orders. Do you understand?" "I understand one thing," says Billy, "The ghetto's ready to explode." Buckles quotes the Bible portentously, and comments that the men "are not presentable enough." Pepper quotes the Bible sarcastically in retort.

12. Back in the room with Bobby and his girlfriend. She reports that somebody shot Reuben. "They think you shot the cop," she tells him. She pleads with him to go to the police and tell the truth. Again he says she is crazy. "Oh, Bobby, please!" she cries. "Tell my mom I'll be alright," he says, and "I need the gun. I've got to split--Bakersfield. Got to find me a car."

13. Pepper and Billy interview an old lady in a house near the park. She is friendly: "I don't know what the world is coming to," she says. "There's no respect for the police." She did not see the fight, but she tells them of a man who stood watching it between two houses, a "white man like you"; he was "carrying a cane."

14. Lieutenant Buckles is heard in the background, giving a press conference, speaking in his usual pseudo-military jargon. Pepper reports the dead policeman's girlfriend has decided to resign from the force. She is "overwrought." The

lieutenant has settled on Bobby as the guilty party. Angie has learned about the existence of Bobby's girlfriend and intends to interview her.

15. At Bobby's girlfriend's home, Pepper talks about the girlfriend of the officer who was killed, and how they were just to be married, and how the girlfriend is responding. The girl is sorry. Pepper says, "Why do you keep looking at that door?", and suddenly flings open the door to the bedroom, but Bobby has fled.

16. Bobby is shown on the run. He holds up a grocery store. "Bobby, what are you doing?" asks the perplexed grocer. There are shots fired, and Bobby flees. The police arrive. The grocer says he has known Bobby for twenty-years, in the barrio. The lieutenant says, "I thought so. I want a team effort, a team program. Understand?" This leads to a confrontation between the lieutenant and Billy, who is not convinced of Bobby's guilt.

17. The lieutenant is holding another press conference. Billy and the undercover men comment that he is "about to make captain." They discuss the man with a cane, observing that it could have been a man holding a rifle. The test results, showing whether the bullet came from a '22 pistol, will be available in the afternoon.

18. Bobby's girlfriend calls, demanding to talk to the girlfriend of the dead policeman, the "only one in the police department I can talk to." A rendez-vous is arranged.

19. At a deserted rainy streetcorner, the two girlfriends meet. "I'm Gloria," says the policewoman. "I'm sorry about the wedding," says Bobby's girl. She then informs Gloria that the outsider caucasian is called Folett, and was previously a gang social worker, disliked by Bobby. They talk about Bobby, who is scared. "Take me there," says Gloria, after being told that he is in Bakersfield. "Looks like the rain's let up," says Bobby's girl.

20. Bobby in a stolen car is being pursued by the police. There is intercutting between him in his screaming car, and shots of the two girlfriends. The chase continues, and then Bobby crashes through a wall. The police follow, their guns at the ready.

21. In the police laboratory, it is confirmed that the slug could not have come from the assumed murder gun. It is probable it came from a rifle. The technician explains in technical language about "slippage". Pepper enters to say that Bobby is pinned down. Billy says excitedly that the bullets don't match.

22. Street scene, in the rain, outside a house where Bobby is holed up. With his loudhailer, the lieutenant is ordering



Bobby to come out, giving numerous orders, although not appearing to be in control of the situation. "Get this civilian out of here," he shouts at someone. "Perhaps you don't understand," he shouts to one of his men who questions an order. He orders tear gas. The real killer is seen briefly. Bobby emerges from the house carrying a gun and is shot down. His girl breaks into tears. Billy and Pepper arrive too late. Billy reports Bobby's innocence to the lieutenant, and adds bitterly, "Ya jes couldn't wait, could ya."

23. Back at the office, the motive of Folett is revealed, as well as the ruse he employed to trap his victim. He was a gang worker who was busted for furnishing drugs to Romero's gang. He spent a year in prison. A psychological study revealed extreme hostility towards the police. A tape of the conversation which preceded the dispatching of the car to the park where the gang fight occurred reveals that Folett had phoned in an anonymous tip, thus setting up his victim. The police sergeant enters to reveal that another cop has been shot. Billy pleads to have all police cars kept out of the barrio, and proposes that he and Pepper answer all calls. This is seen as a contravention of Buckles' orders, but finally the sergeant agrees to the plan.

24. The first call proves to be a false alarm. Billy and Pepper are called on to settle a domestic quarrel. Afterwards,

Pepper says it was good experience: "I'll be able to handle you men better," she says laughing.

25. A second call comes in, reporting a gang fight. "This is it," says Billy, and sends the car screaming off. "Watch your backs." There turns out to be a gang, but no fight. The two undercover cops arrive to help. "Watch our backs," says Billy. There is a shot from a rifle held by someone behind a fence. The heroes duck. They talk by walkie-talkie. There is then a running chase. A man with a rifle is spotted. Pepper points her revolver at him: "Drop it or you're a dead man!" He shoots, but Pepper wings him in the arm. Billy says, "That was one hell of a shot!"

26. Lieutenant Buckles is giving another press conference: "Under my command, ..." He begins. "I think I'm going to throw up," says Billy. However, they console themselves by the knowledge that Buckles is now going to be captain, where they will no longer have to deal with him. Gloria has decided to stay in the force. "Gotta get to work," says Billy.

#### Police Woman (II): An Interpretation

This episode of Police Woman allows us to understand better how the mechanism of mediation works. At the base of every one of the stories considered in this section lies one basic pattern, which we attempt to describe as follows:

Step 1: An initial crime is committed. The initial crime invariably takes the form of a breach of some kind of social contract. Some form of violation is implied, of a person (living or dead, but most often living), or animal, or property. This constitutes a disturbance of the social order, and entails the intervention of an authority figure whose function it is to arrest or punish the disturber. From this flows an initial opposition, or adversary relationship, which often but not always results in a quarrel or other form of violent exchange.

Step 2: A murder, or killing of some kind, occurs. In at least 11 of the 12 American crime dramas considered, with Adam-12 a possible exception, this function is present.)<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this function is double: first, it transforms a simple conflict situation into a pure adversary relationship (a zero-sum game, in game theory terms) with no possibility of further communication between adversaries; secondly, it motivates the entrance of the hero, without whom mediation cannot take place. In the logic of crime drama, the crook cannot be caught without mediation. The murder turns a simple disturbance of the social order into an unredeemable

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<sup>1</sup> It is made clear even in Adam-12 that the drug pusher intended to kill the neighbor's young boy.

crime; it is no accident that Joe callously allows his cohort to die in great pain, or that Bastry sneers about the death of his own nephew, or that "Father Ignatius" cold-bloodedly kills, while wearing the guise of a priest: the villain of a crime drama is usually portrayed as completely nasty. Furthermore, the avenging forces may be as savagely unrelenting as the villain is unrelentingly mischievous, Buckles being a case in point.

Step 3: A third party is caught between the adversaries. Here there are a range of possibilities.

Consider Police Woman (II). Folett, a bad ex-con, incites a gang fight. A gang fight is classed on the dimension intimate-to-anonymous-to-belligerent somewhere between fratricide and warfare. It is in any case a social disturbance which introduces potentially punitive authority figures. Step 2 occurs: a policeman is killed (by Folett from a hiding place). It is important to the sequel that the policeman be about to marry, and that his fiancée be a policewoman, since this provides the mechanism by which mediation is to take place.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>It is rare that the consequences (to family or friends) of a killing are shown in crime dramas. This programme provides an exception to this general rule. It is interesting to compare this finding with that obtained by Caron in his study for this Commission of Québec Téléromans.

Now we have both a real adversary situation:

State 1.

RETRIBUTOR	— Adversary Relationship —	CRIMINAL
(The Police)	(No communication possible)	(Folett)

and (because of Folett's trickery) an apparent adversary situation:

State 2.

RETRIBUTOR	— Adversary Relationship —	CRIMINAL
(The Police)	(Communication Possible)	(The People of the Barrio, in particular Bobby Romero)

Our problem is to get from State 2 to State 1.

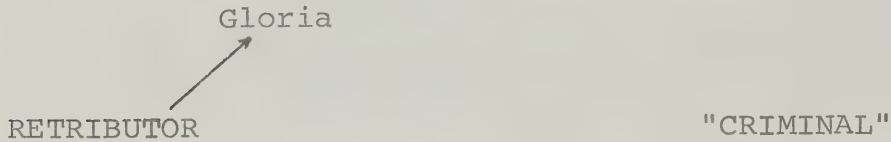
In this process, the policeman's role of mediation is critical: this is Buckles' problem, but as Billy says "he doesn't know a case when he sees one".

Let us examine in turn the crucial steps of mediation in Police Woman (II).

First, Gloria the policewoman, who has been in effect widowed before even being married, grieves, and in her inconsolable sorrow rejects the police career. Her grief prepares her psychologically to sympathize with Bobby's girlfriend, and also make her eligible for Bobby's girlfriend's

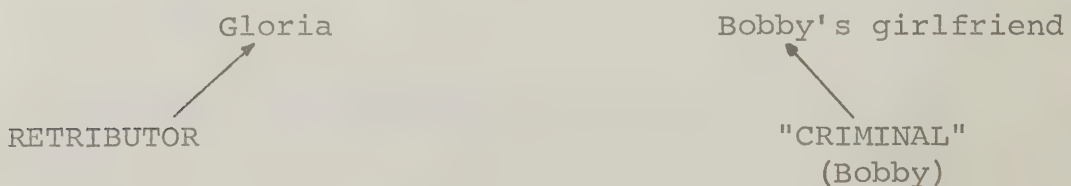


confidence, so that we now represent her as having moved towards the adversary position, but not in a direct line. Let us represent this graphically as follows:



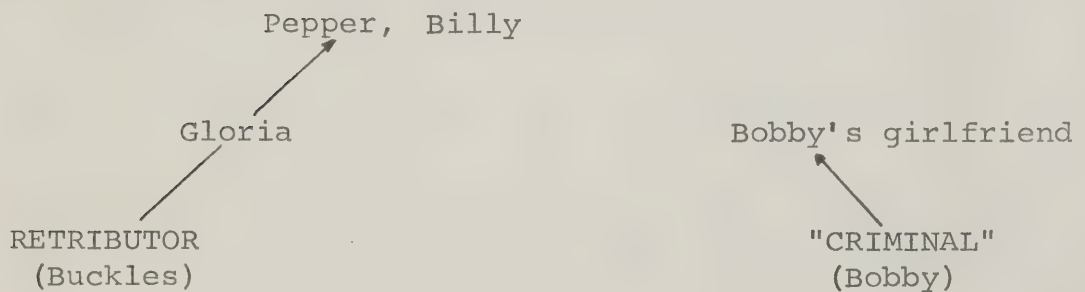
Billy and Pepper return to talk to the people of the Barrio, who are totally hostile at first, but Billy makes an impassioned plea to the crowd, arguing that the police are really on their side, and only mean to keep order. Reuben is persuaded to respond, but as he does so he is shot. Thus the first move towards rapprochement by the "criminal" side is wiped out by Folett's second murder before it can become effective. After this, the hostility of the ghetto becomes even more intense.

Against this intensification is the action of Bobby's girlfriend who pleads with Bobby to go to the police and explain. Now the situation has altered: we find a vector parting from the "criminal" side of the diagramme:



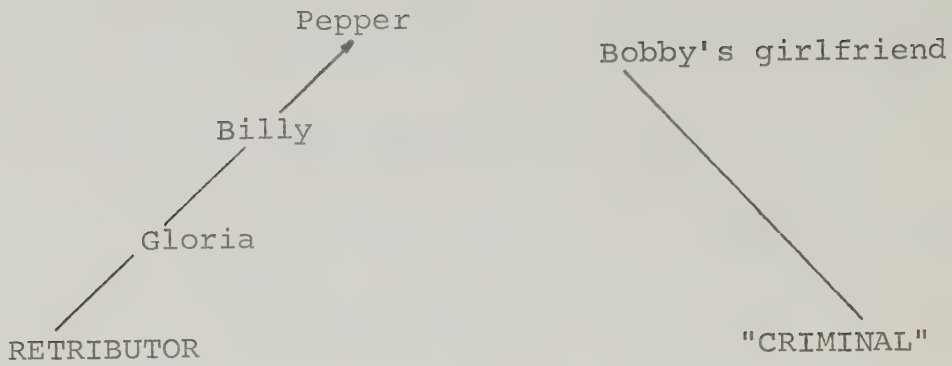
Bobby obstinately refuses to cooperate, and complicates his own life further by going on the run.

Billy and Pepper learn about the presence of a "caucasian" carrying a "stick", present at the time of the crime. This prepares them psychologically to accept Bobby's innocence, so we indicate this on our diagramme as follows:



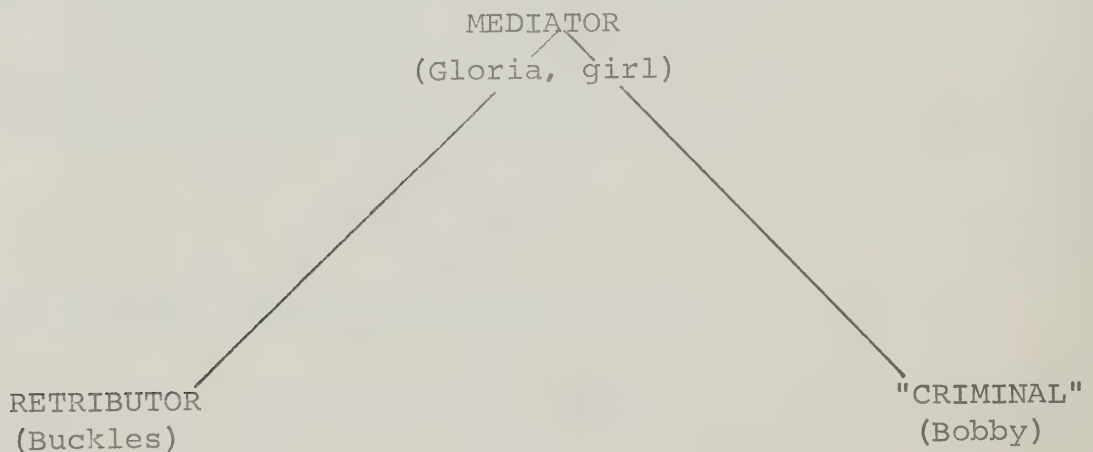
The lieutenant decides Bobby is guilty, leaving him and Bobby as the only major characters whose position has not altered.

Pepper now visits Bobby's girlfriend, barely failing to capture Bobby. She persuades Bobby's girlfriend of her sincerity, preparing the latter to take a further step, so that we indicate the new state as follows:



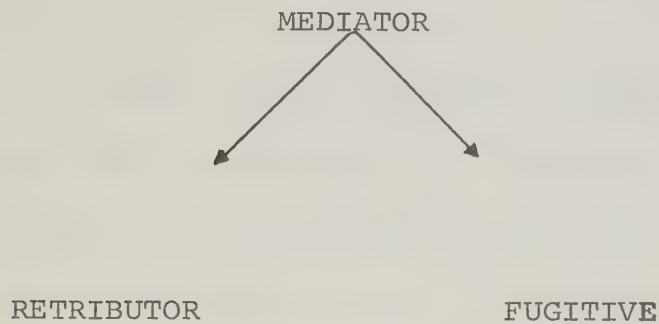
Billy argues with Buckles, but the latter is obdurate, which psychologically separates Billy even further from the initial retributor position.

Bobby's girlfriend now asks to meet the "widowed" policewoman, and the latter, reluctantly, is persuaded it is her duty to do so. The two meet, and mediation is completed:



Immediately the identity of the true killer is revealed, and shortly thereafter positive proof is found that Bobby's gun could not have fired the fatal bullet, and

hence that he is innocent. At this point, the functions of Gloria, the girl, Billy and Pepper have fused into a single purpose: to stop Bobby and Buckles from a fatal confrontation. We show this by reversing the direction of the arrows on the diagramme, as follows:



They are too late, and the unworthy retributor kills the unfortunate scapegoat.

Immediately, a new adversary situation is created: the police versus Folett (who in the meantime kills yet another policeman). Again Billy and Pepper separate themselves from Buckles by subverting his instructions. They then deliberately set themselves up as targets for Folett, thus inviting him to leave the security of his hiding place. He does and is captured. The end. (Except for a somewhat cynical postscript: the false retributor, Buckles, is promoted to captain.)

It may be helpful to consider the plot as a game. The initial crime (villain's first move) disturbs the social equilibrium. Mediation is equivalent to restoration of the social equilibrium. Once mediation occurs, the defeat of the villain is immanent. The task of the villain is to hide (either by concealment, by disguise, or by elimination of evidence), and to get as many people as possible on his side, by subterfuge, by intimidation, by victimization, by enticement, etc. The mediator, in the guise of the police hero, must search for the hiding place, all the while alienating from his adversary the unwitting accomplices of the villain. When the latter has been stripped of his concealment, then only can he be captured (although not infrequently, as in this episode, a trap must be set to entice him out of his hiding place).

It would be laborious to carry out the demonstration here in detail, but the reader can easily convince him or herself that the same mediation model fits quite well the plot lines of Starsky & Hutch, Baretta, and Police Woman (I).

Let us consider the mechanism in another context which is concerned with gang conflict.



Streets of San Francisco

"Merchants of Death"

Broadcast on CTV, May 20, 1976 at 8:00 p.m.

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Résumé of story

1. The story opens with shots of the Community Youth program. Many kids are playing organized sports in the street. A car arrives, and out of it a group of tough-looking kids emerge, looking at the sports. "I told you they'd be here," says one boy. The kids return to their activities. Their counsellor, Eddie Griffin, talks to them about not stealing, and proposes a campaign to wash cars. He sees the tough-looking kids, and accuses them of "pushing junk at high". There is the beginning of a fight between the toughs and a group of Chinese kids, which is broken up by the counsellor. A policeman thanks him. "It's personal with me," says the counsellor. The counsellor has been an all-pro athlete. "A cop's life is always to be disappointed," comments the policeman, "still, every kid you turn straight is one more I don't have to bust."

2. There is a street fight involving two gangs, the Dragons and the Kingsmen. Knives are used and a Dragon is killed. The police arrive. The Dragons refuse to talk:

"We'll take care of it." Names are taken and Mike warns the members of the gangs.

3. Two young kids, on the periphery of the gangs but in the sports program, are passing through a warehouse where they find a box which they decide to steal.

4. Mike and Steve in the Juvenile Bureau. Chang was head of a dangerous gang involved in pushing drugs. There is a gang vendetta, and the Kingsmen are attempting to take over an area, led by Buddy Winston.

5. The two kids open the box. Inside are high-powered machine rifles. One of the kids (in closeup) pretends to mow down an enemy, making shooting noises as he does. One of the boys has a dad who gets hunting magazines. "My dad says, know your merchandise, research your market."

6. The Kingsmen watch the police drive up. Mike questions Buddy and other members of the gang about their movements, and lines up the gang. A friendly conversation follows between Eddie Griffin (the counsellor) and Steve, who apparently know each other. "You can't do it all," says Steve. Eddie says that for at least three hours a week he can keep some of them from being stoned. He admits that Buddy Winston is "using us", but he sees possibilities in Rick, Buddy's second-in-command.

7. At home, the two kids who have stolen guns listen to a conversation involving one of their fathers, who admits that he is catering to an "over-supply" of amphetamines in the area. "Why worry if Head Office doesn't worry?" he says.
8. Two of the Kingsmen, including Buddy, are seen fleeing from a very modern car driven by the Dragons. There is shooting. "We gotta get some guns," says Buddy desperately.
9. One of the boys who has stolen the box of guns talks with his father: "Are you responsible for what happens when you sell a knife?" The question is posed hypothetically. The father replies that there is no problem, the seller has no responsibility. After the conversation, the two kids decide to put up their guns for sale for a thousand dollars. "Why not," they say, "Everyone else does it."
10. Mike and Steve answer a call about the burglary of a crate of M-16's. The dealer says sharply: "I just supply them; I don't tell them what to do with them." Steve says, "You're a businessman, right?" "Right," says the dealer aggressively, "I got a licence to export these guns." Reference is made to the street gangs. It is learned that the guard at the warehouse witnessed the murder of the Dragon and called the police.
11. Buddy (having got wind of the stealing of the guns) and

the two kids with the guns meet. They ask for \$50 "up front". They are to meet later. One of the kids thinks that the other is crazy because "Buddy can't meet our price."

12. At the police station, the guard has been persuaded to give an identification of Buddy Winston as the killer of the Dragon. He is promised protection; Buddy will be brought in and held.

13. Winston and the kids meet. The guns are handed over but Buddy doesn't pay. Buddy then exultantly shoots the windows out of a nearby car, just for target practice.

14. Mike and Steve watch from their parked car as Buddy appears carrying a parcel. There is a chase; Buddy throws down his parcel; Steve catches Buddy; Mike finds the parcel. "Don't try to plant that on me," snarls Buddy.

15. In the poolroom, Eddie Griffin has an exchange with Buddy. He accuses Eddie of getting his kicks playing cop. Eddie says to him that he is going to go down just like Chang did, but "you're not going to take these kids with you." His argument is especially directed at Rick. Griffin then intimidates Buddy physically, but Buddy snarls, "Go ahead, hit me."

16. Buddy is stalking the guard: "There's the potbelly that fingered me."

17. Mike and Steve protest the releasing of Buddy, but the prosecutor's office is unsympathetic. There is an argument, in which it is made clear that Mike and Steve feel they have not been backed up by the prosecutor's office.

18. Buddy meets one of the boys with the guns and threatens to turn him into the police if he does not bring guns.

19. The police go to the guard's apartment to interview him, but discover him in the dark, badly beaten up. They promise to protect him. "Like you did the last time?" he asks, and then decides he can no longer testify.

20. The two kids are uncertain what to do, how to "handle the business aspect". One of them starts off to deliver the guns. His partner fears for his friend's safety and decides to call Eddie Griffin, to tell him that his friend is meeting the gang in an old shack. In the meantime, his father has begun to learn what has been going on. An ensuing conversation emphasizes the double standard of morality held by the father. He is shocked at his son's behaviour, but the audience knows that he, in fact, inspired it.

21. One of the kids is badly beaten up in an alleyway, and might well be killed except for the intervention of Rick, Buddy's second-in-command. "Are you trying to take over?" snarls Buddy. Eddie arrives to learn that the gang has run off with all the guns.



22. The father of the boy who has been beaten up and has a concussion, says, "It's my fault." He now realizes the import of his son's question about selling knives. "I deal in drugs," he admits.

23. Eddie Griffin learns of an upcoming gangfight (blast) where the Kingsmen hope to wipe out the Dragons and Centurions. Griffin calls the police.

24. The gangs assemble under a great ramp. "Wait until everyone has arrived," says Buddy. (Everybody drives up in late model expensive cars.) The head of the Dragons comes. Suddenly Griffin is there shouting "Get out, it's a trap." Everyone begins to run, except Buddy. Rick runs. The police pull up. Buddy tries to shoot Eddie Griffin, but is gunned down by Steve in the nick of time. "There was no way with this one," says Steve. "I guess you're right," says Eddie.

#### Streets of San Francisco: An Interpretation

We first convince ourselves that the initial sequence follows the habitual pattern: At the beginning of the show there is the beginning of a gang fight, which is broken up by Eddie, the gang worker, who is an authority

figure. (If we had any doubt, the scene immediately following makes the association between Eddie and the law quite explicit.) A second gang fight occurs, and this time Buddy kills a Dragon. The police enter. There is insufficient evidence for a conviction (except that a bloody jacket indicates the culprit was a Kingsman). The killer is hidden to the police at the beginning (although it will turn out there was a witness).

Buddy is the villain of the story. He fits the usual pattern: he is cruel, and nasty.

However, there is a second villain. It will be recalled from Police Woman (II) that Folett, an ex-gang worker, had violated his trust by selling drugs to the gang, and subsequently returned to incite gang warfare. In Streets of San Francisco also, drugs are being deliberately, for corporate and private profit, oversupplied to the area, with the result that gang warfare is being incited (in the sense that districts are being "carved up" by competing gangs). The "inciter" thinks of himself as a respectable business man, but it is made clear that the business ethic is reprehensible (the point being driven home in not-too-subtle fashion through the interview with the gun merchant).

Mediation is effected, from the police side, by Eddie, who keeps working with the gang members, thinking of positive alternatives to fighting, such as washing cars, and who particularly keeps trying to persuade Buddy's principal ally, Rick, to give up their dangerous plans. These efforts at mediation prove inadequate.

Instead an irony is introduced. The son of the pill peddler, seduced by his father's business logic, decides to sell guns to Buddy, so that gang warfare can be intensified. This puts him squarely on Buddy's side. His "reward" is to be nearly beaten to death by Buddy. This alienates him from Buddy. Secondly Rick protests the beating, thus opening up a gap between Buddy and his principal ally. The boy's chum calls in Eddie who learns of the plans of the massacre. Eddie then frightens all of Buddy's gang into abandoning him, throwing down all the guns, and, the mediation complete, Buddy is shot down by the police. Presumably, the pill merchant has learned a lesson (since he was not intrinsically bad, but merely the vehicle of a bad ideology).

Interestingly enough, in this story, the police's direct efforts at mediation fail. In spite of their finding a witness, and catching Buddy red-handed carrying guns, he is immediately freed by the prosecutor's office (on grounds of

insufficient evidence), whereupon he beats up the witness, and removes this possible means of mediation.

Streets of San Francisco seems to be one of the few shows which is concerned with transmitting specific messages related to social problems. In this instance, the pill merchant theme proved to be an ingenious manner to convey explicit social content without altering the basic form of the story (although making it somewhat more complex).

We now turn to consider briefly two programmes of a rather different character: Mannix and Barnaby Jones. Both are stories about private eyes.

Mannix

"Who will dig the grave?"

Broadcast on CKVR (CBC affiliate), May 23, 1976 at  
2:00 p.m.

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Résumé of Story

1. Mannix in a public phone booth is informed that "Mr. Phillips is ready." "What's the mystery," he asks. He is told to walk half-way down the street. An ambulance appears, he is stripped of coat and shirt, dressed as an orderly, and whisked off to Memorial Hospital. There, Mannix in his disguise pushes through a crowd of reporters, pushing a stretcher. "I don't name 'em, I just wheel 'em," he cracks to the reporters. A doctor (played by Austin Willis) leads Mannix into a private room, where "what's left of David Blair Phillips", as he puts it, is found propped up in bed. He is dying. His problem, and Mannix's task, has to do with finding needles in haystacks. A screen is pulled back and a film is run. We see a pretty folksinger, whom Mannix recognizes as Susan Ward, otherwise Mrs. Phillips. "Find her," says Phillips. But she has died? True, her clothes were found near the beach, with a suicide note. But later newsreel clips of a folksong festival revealed her to be alive. (There



is a break here for the usual title sequence.) We see a closeup of Susan. She had become famous at this festival at an earlier time. Why had she run away? "I don't hunt people who don't want to be found," says Mannix. "I was cruel, jealous," says Phillips. "I loved her. I want her back to make amends, if I can, before I die." He offers Mannix a generous fee, says it is all the information he has, and ends in apparent exhaustion, "Goodnite, Mannix." Mannix leaves. As he does, Phillips' assistant enters, and a revived Phillips says: "When he finds her, kill them both!"

2. Mannix is driving. A car follows, using a device which "bleeps". "Don't crowd him." Mannix enters a building.

3. Mannix is in the midst of a recording session (a rock group). In Master Control, he says to the man in charge: "Good group!" The latter replies: "If you're looking for grass, try the park." "I'm here about a discovery of yours," replies Mannix. He explains his assignment from Susan's husband. "Her owner, you mean," replies the impresario. She has drowned. No. You're putting me on. No. The impresario now explains his association with Susan. She "borrowed the guitar and stole the song." She was a "turned-on chick." She had electricity. Phillips kept her on display; a half billion buys a lot. Henry Talbot was his watch-dog.

But Susie had her ways: she was tough, ambitious, but human. She had come along, but always on her own terms.

4. Mannix, still being followed, attempts to use his phone and deduces from the static the presence of a bleeping device. He stops, removes the device, and places it on a nearby police motorcycle. He then watches his "tail" drive past. He phones Phillips who is "under sedation". Mannix asks his doctor what has happened to Henry Talbot. There was a "misunderstanding" and Talbot left. Last heard of in Rome. Phillips was generous. "I'm being tailed," says Mannix. Phillips, listening to this conversation, walks around as it ends: "I told you we had the right man," he says to the doctor.

5. Mannix interviews a professor of anthropology about Susan Ward. "Leave the dead alone," says the professor acidly. After reassurance, he explains that she studied for three years with him. She was an exceptional person. Mannix persuades him that he is not interested in exploiting Susan. "At least, you looked past the headlines," says the professor. She was shrewd, complex. She did excellent research. She kept that part of her life separate from the other. She was close to a young medical student, Navajo, from Tablerock reservation, where her research had been conducted.

6. Mannix is phoned by his secretary from a bus station, who informs him the office phone has been bugged by a man who seemed "very efficient". Mannix contacts Phillips. "Arrivederci", says Mannix, "I'm on my way to Rome." Phillips deduces this latter is for his benefit. "Watch every flight out of San Francisco," he orders.

7. Mannix is in a New Mexico airport at the car rental service. He is being watched. The girl at the car rental office tries to make him tell his destination, but Mannix puts her off with a joke. The next scene finds him at a gas station bar in the TableRock Indian Reservation, where he talks with the bartender in a friendly fashion, although the latter is obviously suspicious of strangers. When Mannix leaves, the bartender phones the young Navajo doctor to warn him of Mannix's mission.

8. Mannix asks the young doctor to help him find Susan Ward. The doctor cannot help, he is busy, Mannix is intruding. The doctor talks in Navajo to his "field nurse". "Who can summon the dead?" he asks. "Yeah, who?" replies Mannix.

9. A girl exits from a small house. It is Susan Ward. When she re-enters, Mannix is waiting. "Susan Ward?" "I just don't want to talk to you." "Your husband hired me,"

explains Mannix. Susan laughs: "You must be good!" She should be flattered. She is curious: "And if I say no?" Mannix says there is no question of going back to bondage. The husband wants to see her, he is dying. He wants to make amends for his cruelty. He lied, says Susan: "I tried to kill him. That's why I ran." "Have you seen the killing room," she asks. The Eagle's Nest: a room hung with weapons, dedicated to death. "I needled him. He hit me, again and again, and then he began to enjoy it. I grabbed a warclub and hit him. That's it." Susan Ward was a "shady lady", hiding in shadows. She has tried to strip her life down to basics, until she can "look in the mirror and like what I see." Does she like what she sees? I've learned to live with it, she answers. "I'll take your message back," says Mannix. "Please tell him. You couldn't find me," she says. She pulls a gun, but is easily disarmed by Mannix. The phone rings. It is the doctor. "Susan, there are two men coming." We see the doctor phoning. There are shots. "Harvey!" cries Susan. "I've got to get there." "And do what?" points out Mannix. "Susan," he says, "I was picked as the judas goat to lead the lamb to slaughter, only this time they're going to kill the goat too."

10. Mannix in his car is driving through the desert,

followed by a van. They stop. "This is where we split up," says Mannix to Susan. "Find an isolated spot and stay there," he orders her. He is going looking for Henry Talbot. "I'm a romantic," he says. "Sometimes you have to gamble on people." He leaves, and is now pursued by a jeep. There is a wild chase sequence, with the jeep gaining. Shots are fired. Mannix' car crashes. The men approach the car. Suddenly Mannix appears from behind a nearby hill. He fires a warning shot. "The next shot won't miss," he warns. He has them remove their shoes, and drives off in their jeep. "I'd like to leave you for the buzzards, but I'll settle for this," he says harshly.

11. Back in the recording studio, Mannix informs the impresario that he has found Susan, but the "watchdogs" are "wolves". He receives a call from his secretary, Peggy, who informs him that Talbot has been dead since January, and that his death certificate is signed by Dr. Gregory (Austin Wills).

12. Mannix has arranged to have the body of Henry Talbot exhumed (by court order). The grave is empty. Mannix tells his friend to send a squad to Eagle Nest fast. "Grave robbing is a dirty crime."

13. At Eagle Nest, Mannix awaits. Susan Ward enters,



elegantly attired, now back in her role as Mrs. David Blair Phillips. "I've come back," asking herself who she is: "I keep my bargains. I came home." As part of the arrangement, there will be a million dollars for the Navajo hospital. Where is Phillips? Under sedation. "Who made the bargain?" asks Mannix. The doctor. Did he mention Henry Talbot, whom Mannix suspects as not having died from natural causes. No, replies Susan, Phillips is ruthless, but not a fool. He considers violence the last resort of fools. She is grateful to Mannix. "I'm all right," she says. "Tell your watchdogs you're going to drive Mannix into town," Mannix challenges. The servant says no dice, strict orders that Susan is not to leave. Dr. Gregory is sent for. He says to Susan, you agreed to stay. Anyway, David gave absolute instructions. She is not to leave. We learn that this entire scene is being watched on closed circuit television by Phillips. Mannix asks about Henry Talbot. He died of a bad fall, there was nothing I could do, explains Dr. Gregory. Suddenly, the voice of Phillips is heard. "Please have my wife and Mannix come upstairs." As they enter, he says sardonically to Susan: "I'm not ill, I'm dead." "Henry!" she exclaims. "Yeah," he says, "Risen from the dead!" "No, Susan," he adds, "You didn't kill him, I did. I finished the job. For all that money! I took his identity." "I

would have kept the bargain," says Susan. "Now you're gonna kill both of us," she adds. Mannix warns him there's no chance to get away with it, because he has left messages. Mannix communicates secretly with Susan, and then abruptly starts a fight. While he is being subdued, Susan takes a weapon from the wall. They all exit from the building. With the help of the primitive weapon passed to him by Susan, Mannix almost manages to regain control, but Dr. Gregory gets the upper hand with a gun. At just this moment, the police arrive, and our heroes are saved. Mannix holds Susan tenderly.

14. In an epilogue, we learn that Susan is going back to TableRock, her search for herself not yet terminated. In a tender scene, we are left with the possibility that, one day perhaps, she and Mannix will see each other again....

Barnaby Jones

"Theater of Fear"

Broadcast on ABC, May 20, 1976 at 8:30 p.m.

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Résumé of Story

1. The scene opens on an exterior shot of a house. Inside Miss Evans is rehearsing lines from a play. Suddenly, the window blows open and the wind rushes in. Miss Evans shows signs of fear, telephones her director, Parrish, who reassures her. We learn that she was a big star in her previous movie, but she has been out of acting for some time. The new play is sold out. She is on the edge of the big time. He asks about her servant, Agnes: "Agnes is off". Miss Evans is alone. She hears a sound, I thought I closed the door, she says. There are noises: "I think there's someone in the house," she says in terror, "Please hurry," she adds to Parrish. She picks up sharp scissors, and then stands on the balcony outside her door, shouting down into the empty house below: "Please go away! Please!" She screams. (All this scene is shot dramatically, with low angle shots of Miss Evans, etc.) The police arrive, the dog barks fiercely, Parrish picks up the scissors she has let drop, and then she is found hiding, whereupon she breaks into desperate tears.

2. The star is recovering with her nurse, Miss Agnes, who makes her drink orange juice. Barnaby Jones is introduced. Last night's prowler, whose shadow Miss Evans saw, took nothing. She has had threatening phone calls, taking the form of quotations from a play she once starred in, although she has an unlisted phone.

As they leave, she is accosted by a drunk, Roy Kilgore, former superbowl hero and ex-husband of Miss Evans. "Stay away," she says. Nurse Agnes describes him to Barnaby as "trash my baby landed up with." They have been separated for two or three years. Their child is at boarding school. Agnes is sad that Miss Evans is going back to the stage; she is quite opposed. Jones looks speculative.

3. In the rehearsal, the stress is showing. Miss Evans' shaky performance is watched by an understudy, who says to Parrish' assistant, Davis, "I'm better than she is." She, the understudy, "knows where the bodies are buried."

4. Roy Kilgore is trying to make up with Shirley Evans: "I made a mistake." Kilgore and Parrish have words, and Kilgore leaves. Davis says to Jones: "I sure hope Mr. Parrish hasn't picked himself a falling star." Opening night could be a disaster.

5. Barnaby drives up to a poolhall, where he finds Roy. "It's not quite as good as the superbowl." Roy explains that he thinks they're trying to make a fool of Shirley. "She's like me," he says, "All washed up. A drunk." Barnaby asks him where he was the night before, but it doesn't check out. Barnaby watches out of sight as the understudy enters and talks to Roy. "We both know it's right," she says, "Whatever I say it must seem as if I'm being selfish." Barnaby watches.

6. Parrish is talking to Evans beside the pool. "I only care about you," he says. She is more relaxed, doing "meditation with my feet." He leaves, having assured her that he loves her, and that he will see her tomorrow. Agnes berates Miss Evans. "What about your daughter in boarding school? Cathy needs a mother." Shirley accuses Agnes of being a hypocrite: "You like the good times too. If it weren't for me. . . ." She apologizes, but too late, Agnes, wounded, will pick up her things later.

7. Jones in his office with his secretary learns that a young woman had been killed in an accident by Miss Evans' car. He mulls over the matter of the phone calls, with the link to previous plays.



8. Miss Evans on the phone to Mrs. Parrish has received more threatening phone calls in the last half hour. There are more noises in the house. She is alone. Someone is here again. "Leave me alone," she screams into the dark. She is in complete terror. Outside the dog barks. The house is watched by Roy from the outside. He looks through a window. Suddenly Roy is attacked, he cries "No", and then his body is pulled away and we next see it floating in the swimming pool.

9. The police and Barnaby are beside the pool, next morning. "Looks like he fell and hit his head," says the lieutenant. Miss Evans won't be troubled by prowlers anymore.

10. Miss Evans had not seen Kilgore. Jones notes that Davis the assistant had arrived with remarkable dispatch after the call of Miss Evans.

11. Agnes, Cathy and Shirley meet at the boarding school. Shirley pleads: "I'm doing this for both of us." Cathy says bitterly: "I'm gone all the year. I liked it better when you were drunk. You're selfish. All you care about is the theatre." Shirley says in desperation: "What do people want from me anyway?"

12. In rehearsal, the understudy is doing the number. Jones applauds. It was good, he says. "It was perfect,"

she replies. She says about Evans: "I'm terribly sorry."  
"You're a very good actress," observes Barnaby. He wonders what business she had with Roy in the bar. No business, she says, and then adds: "Shirley Evans is a lush to the core. She's an inch away from popping the cork."

13. At home, Agnes discovers an empty bottle. Shirley is gone, drinking again. Meanwhile, Barnaby has discovered from his secretary a clue to the identity of the father of the girl killed by Shirley's car.

14. Barnaby enters the bar to find Shirley drunk. She is in a state of deep depression. Barnaby begins: "You're something special," he says, "They're hungry for you. You are doing the thing you were born to do. One in a million makes it to the top of the mountain." Shirley breaks into sobs, and leaves the bar supported by Barney.

15. Barnaby inspects the pool. He then talks to Davis, who, it is now revealed, is the father of the girl who was killed. Davis admits the association, but says he is a professional. His daughter was wild. It was one of those things. Barnaby shows polite skepticism.

16. Barnaby is prowling around the house, looking. The dog barks at him, and Barnaby appears to be thinking.

17. Back in his office, he asks his secretary to get Mrs. Parrish on the phone. Maybe Parrish wants his show to fail. He asks Mrs. Parrish to say exactly what she heard on the phone the night that Miss Evans phoned her husband about the prowler.

18. Agnes is phoning Barnaby's office. While she is talking to the secretary, Agnes is knocked out from behind. (This scene is punctuated, like so many in this show, by "spooky" music.)

19. Jones is talking to the owner of the dog. His secretary reaches him with a message to get right over to Miss Evans.

20. Shirley Evans is again discovered in her room screaming in terror: "Please, no! Leave me alone! Help me!" Barnaby enters and says: "There's no one here, Miss Evans. You deserve an award." Now it is revealed that Kilgore saw her performance and realized that there was no one there, so he had to be killed. She screams about the "stupid faces", but Barnaby assures her that she will never have to face them again: "You don't have to do it again." "I never wanted to be out there," she says.

21. The clue came from the dog's bark. There was no bark the first time, but when Kilgore was killed, the dog barked. Shirley looks up in surprise as Agnes enters: "You've been

hurt!" she says. She has now lost touch with reality. For the understudy this has been the biggest break of her life; for Shirley also.

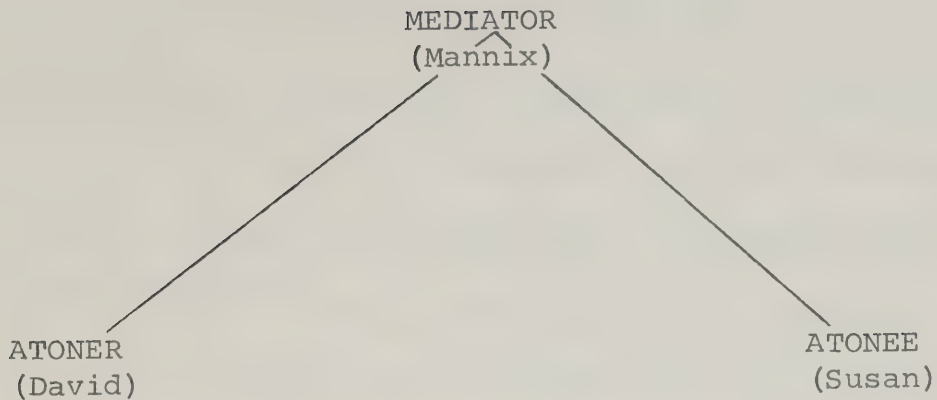
Mannix and Barnaby Jones: An Interpretation

In Mannix, there is again an apparent situation and a real situation of mediation.

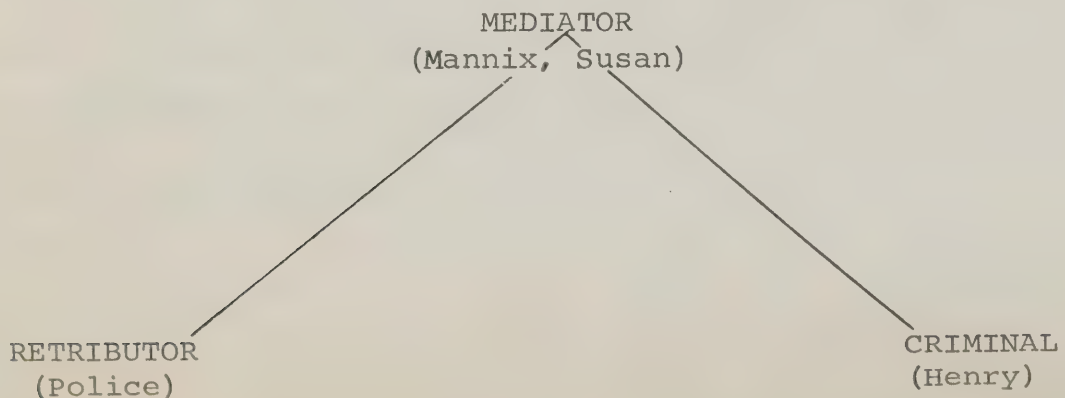
The initial disturbance occurs when husband and wife quarrel, husband David becomes sadistic, and wife Susan tries to kill him. David, unconscious, is murdered by his "watchdog".

Here, two concealments occur, providing for two situations of mediation: Susan flees and disappears from sight, and Henry Talbot takes a disguise, assuming the identity of his dead patron.

In the apparent situation of mediation, the function of retribution is transmuted into that of atonement, and that of committing a crime into one of having had a "crime" (of "cruelty and jealousy") committed against one. Hence the apparent triangle is:



In fact, a genuine crime has occurred, and the eventual outcome will find Mannix (who fulfills that part of the policeman's function which is concerned with mediation) and Susan (who is the dupe of Henry Talbot, just as Lorelei is the victim of Villiano, Mrs. Henderson the attempted victim of Marshall, Nations' wife the symbolic victim of the unknown killer, Larry the victim of Father Ignatius, Billy the victim of Bastry, Bobby the victim of Folett, and Baretta the supposed victim of Joe through the agency of Jake) mediating between Henry Talbot and the police.





In the first part of the story, Mannix' quest is mediated by interventions of Susan's friends, the rock promoter, the anthropologist, and finally the Navajo doctor (who unknowingly gives Susan's hiding place away). Mannix and Susan meet and discover a bond. As the initial apparent opposition is mediated, the real opposition begins to reveal itself. David Blair was not telling the truth, and Mannix realizes that he has been set up.

Susan now returns, placing herself voluntarily into the hands of the criminal. Mannix enters the trap, and the true villain is now tricked into revealing himself. A struggle follows, and, inevitably, the villain is captured.

In Barnaby Jones, the functions of criminal and victim are united in the same person. Shirley Evans is two people: on the one hand she is a talented, ambitious star on her way to the top; on the other hand she is a frightened little girl, terrified of all the "faces out there". The vulnerable little girl is held thrall by the ambitious star, until she is liberated at the very last moment by Barnaby Jones, whereupon she is unable to remember her previous self (she has no knowledge of having attacked nurse Agnes, for example). All of her real friends, Roy, Agnes, and her own daughter Cathy, oppose her stage career, and try to liberate

the real Shirley from her captor Miss Evans. Roy comes so close to discovering the secret that he is killed.

### Summary and conclusions

In this final part of Section III, I want to say some relatively impressionistic things about what and how television crime drama communicates.

Throughout the report, I have tried to illustrate two things: first that it is possible to ring an indefinite number of changes on a limited number of relatively simple story elements, and secondly that the crime drama communicates more than one level of meaning.

Let us consider the first matter.

An extraordinary achievement of modern linguistics and cybernetics has been to show how in practice a finite procedure can be made to generate and recognize the elements of an infinite set. Chomsky posed the problem as follows: every human produces and understands, without feelings of strangeness, sentences which are not identical to any sentence he has ever heard or seen before. How, given infinite novelty, can we so easily recognize meanings? The answer for language must be the existence of a device called a grammar.

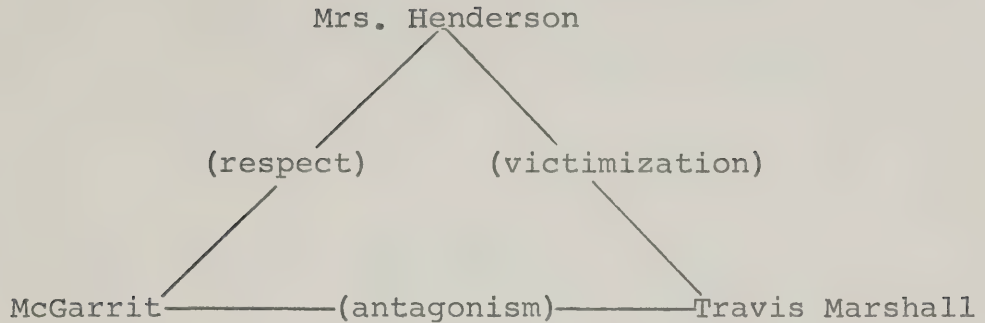
I am under no illusion that I have succeeded in the space of a brief period of research in revealing the "grammar" of crime drama; I hope however to have shown that the discovery of such a grammar is feasible. Even our preliminary investigation has shown the extraordinary degree to which elements re-occur across series, woven into combinations which give every story an appearance of superficial freshness.

The question of meaning is much more complex.

To illustrate what I believe to be the case, namely that meaning is multidimensional, I would ask the reader to suspend for a moment his skeptical faculties, and attempt an exercise with me.

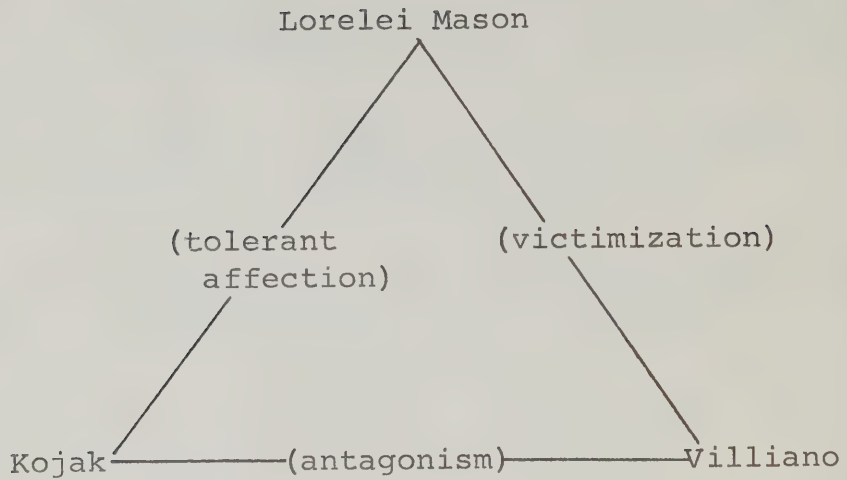
In most of the stories we have considered there are in fact three major characters.

For example, in Hawaii Five-O, the three characters are McGarrit, Mrs. Henderson and Travis Marshall. All other characters play essentially secondary roles. The three are linked by three types of relation: antagonism/opposition, affection/respect, and attempted victimization.



Now let us use our imagination. The relationship between McGarrit and Mrs. Henderson strikes one, on watching the play, as that of a son and his mother. McGarrit exhibits respectful behaviour throughout, tempered by mutual affection and apparent trust. But if the relation between McGarrit and Mrs. Henderson is that of son to mother, that of McGarrit to Travis Marshall is equivalent of son to father, and that of Travis Marshall to Mrs. Henderson of exploitative father to mother, as seen by the son. In other words, the situation can be interpreted as a version of the Oedipal triangle, for the universality of which at least a reasonable amount of psychoanalytical evidence exists.

There are equally three main characters in Kojak, linked as follows:



Again giving our imagination rein, it is not difficult to see the story as a parable of the bad son who attempts to possess the mother, and is chastized by the righteous, vindictive father. Kojak is thus a parable of authoritarianism, Hawaii Five-O of liberalism.

Similarly, we can perceive a triangle in Police Story: in Nations' mind his wife is victimized by the professor (again the son-father-mother theme), and this somehow becomes mixed in his mind with the crime he is investigating.

With equal ingenuity, it will be found that the other plots considered to this point lend themselves to similar interpretations. These illustrations will however suffice because it would be unwise to be seduced by the facility with which such readings can be obtained into



believing that we are tapping the hidden "meaning" of the programs. What I wish to establish here is that it is easy to find hidden meanings.

I think this brings us close to the reason for the appeal of crime dramas. Because of the simplicity of their structure, both syntactic and semantic, it is possible to read into them meanings that have emotional roots deep in the human psyche, although I am equally prepared to believe that such meanings vary from individual to individual.

That such meanings persist is a tribute to the durability of what Maranda called "semantic grooves". The themes and plot lines of television crime drama do not differ in their essentials, I believe from the primitive mythic structures of earlier periods, the same themes which were exploited in the Greek classical theater and in Shakespearian English drama. Indeed, in many ways, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre had social functions that were probably closer to modern TV than to Broadway. Shakespeare demonstrated that the "crime drama" (Macbeth, Othello, Lear, etc.) is potentially a vehicle of powerful communication. It may be asked how that potential is employed in the context of commercial television.

If the sample considered here is typical, then one can answer that the potential is not employed, but exploited. Television crime drama is characterized by immense ingenuity and almost total lack of originality.

We have talked more in this report about violation than about violence. The two words have of course a common derivation (from the Latin violare). For me at least the difference is between the surface and the deep structure of crime drama: violence is immediately obvious, violation is related to the social meaning of a story.

The violence is obvious in television, although it is not conveyed generally by overt displays of brutality or obscene cruelty (as seems to be increasingly the case in film). Rather the violence of TV crime drama is part of the "gloss" of the show; the teaser, the use of music and camera technique to point up moments of tension, the careening car chases through public streets, the screaming siren, and so on. It is in fact difficult to get at this "glossy" violence by body counts, which are on the whole restrained (seldom more than two murders per show).

Most of the dramas considered begin with a violation (of person or property) which constitutes a breach of public order. But in fact the "déclencheur", or initial act, is seldom the real focus of the story, the program *Police Story* being again an exception. The result is a pervasive banality; the shows seem initially to have a serious core of potential meaning, but the appearance is largely illusory.

The dramas do communicate then, as much by what they do not say as by what they say. At the surface level, their sheen communicates an easy sensationalism, consistent with the commercial wrapping in which they are served up. At a deeper level, profound meanings are hinted at and powerful emotional responses set briefly in motion, but the story only titillates without revealing or exploring the human consequence of the logical dilemmas it presents.

At the end of the previous section, a question was posed which now demands an answer. What, we asked, is the stability which provides security?

With the possible exception of Baretta, it can be said that overt competitiveness is universally regarded as a defect. One thinks of Lorelei, Villiano, Shirley Evans, Buckles. In the police teams of Hawaii Five-O, Kojak, Police Woman, Adam-12, Starsky & Hutch, Streets of San Francisco, competition is never seen. Each of the teams fits into a well-regulated hierarchy.

Commercialism is also anathema. This message is made very clear in Streets of San Francisco, and is reiterated in an episode to be analyzed in the next section.

In most of the shows, much attention is given to office work, and scientific expertise. As the background of

the cowboy hero was the mountains, so the background of the police hero is a typewriter and a car.

While all of the police heroes are brave, individual heroism plays little part in the police drama, except in *Baretta* and *Mannix*. Indeed the heroism of *Nations* was severely reprimanded. When the villain is to be taken, the police usually arrive in force, and in well-disciplined order. Even *Mannix* was the forerunner of the police squad.

Happy women appear mostly as secretaries and devoted wives. The exception is the female sergeant of *Police Woman*, who seems to be a concession to changing times, but ultimately her role is secondary.

A man's world, an office world, hierarchical in its social forms, anti-commercial, suspicious of the press and the political process, anti-individualistic and anti-competitive, trusting to scientific process--what total image is this? It seems to me that this configuration is that of the well-run bureaucracy. If so, then television crime drama is above all a celebration of the bureaucratic way of life.

Security lies in bureaucracy.

Between the classical western and the modern police drama, a distance has been travelled.

SECTION IV

FROM THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO  
TO THE SIDE STREETS OF TORONTO



## Introduction

Of the thirteen shows assessed in this project, twelve were of American origin. One was produced by the CBC and is set in Toronto. Its title is Sidestreet. In this last brief section, we turn to consider this attempt to produce crime drama in a Canadian setting and to develop a distinctively Canadian idiom.

There are significant differences between the Canadian show and its American counterparts. In order to point up some of the most apparent contrasts, I have chosen to place Sidestreet in contiguity with an episode of Streets of San Francisco (which will be referred to hereinafter as Streets (II)). Both programs treat the theme of a community which is menaced by a large organization.

We look first at a brief synopsis of the plot of Streets (II) and then at a more detailed résumé of the story of Sidestreet.

Streets of San Francisco (II)

Broadcast on ABC, April 15, 1976, at 8:00 p.m.

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Story Synopsis (brief form)

The show opens as a young couple drive up to their home in a city neighborhood. The wife is several months pregnant, and the two are looking forward to their new life. The husband exhibits tender concern for his wife. Suddenly, the front lights of their car are smashed violently, and then the side windows. The woman screams in terror. The man attempts to exit; then the violence ceases, the attackers disappear; neighbors come pouring out, full of concern.

We learn that this is not the first time similar events have occurred in this neighborhood; there seems to be a systematic campaign of violence underway directed at this particular neighborhood. The local printer, who is a Jewish immigrant, decides to go see Mike, one of the heroes of the series, who is an old friend. The latter is at first reluctant to help, since it is out of his jurisdiction, but is finally prevailed upon. He starts research in his spare time, and discovers that his printer friend has not exaggerated:

statistically, the number of crimes in this district is completely out of proportion to normal city levels.

In another scene we learn that a large multinational communications firm wants to acquire all properties in the district to build a new western headquarters. The people who live there have proved resistant to offers, even relatively generous offers, to purchase. The head of the company is seen talking to his young West Coast executive. He makes it clear that the company wants results, and is not interested in excuses. Furthermore, he holds out a promise of a promotion to world headquarters in New York, if the land can be acquired in the impossibly short deadline, and for the correct price. He then dismisses his assistant (who has throughout the interview showed signs of nervousness, and lack of self-confidence).

The West Coast executive meets his real-estate "agent" who is responsible for the on-street negotiations (operating under a number of dummy companies). The message is passed on brutally: the company, the Junior Executive says harshly, wants results; it is not interested in how results are obtained; that is the agent's problem. The agent protests the high-handed tactics to which he is being subjected, but the message is made clear: results or else!

The agent makes a further attempt to buy the property by increasing his offer, but the printer, who is a community leader, refuses the offer unconditionally: this is his home, his community, and he has no intention of leaving.

The West Coast Executive is revealed to have marital problems. When he gets home, he brings out his briefcase and gets down to work. His beautiful wife attempts to seduce him but he is completely wrapped up in his calculations and rejects her advances. He talks about the importance of a promotion to New York. She reveals what being a company wife means to her--loneliness, being separated from him, never being able to put down roots, not having a family.

The real estate agent is observed hiring toughs. The next night the printing plant is vandalized, and the printer himself is killed.

The next morning the wife begins to suspect her husband's implication in the crime when she sees the news of the killing of the printer in the papers, since she knew that the printer was the principal stumbling block to the land assembly plan: she has heard his name mentioned in passing. The real estate agent arrives and demands to see

the Junior Executive. In a threatening scene, the agent makes clear what has happened, and demands to be paid. The Executive is confused and shocked.

Mike and his assistant are now on the case officially. By patient interview, they discover, eventually, that a common thread in the neighborhood is to offer to buy property, and always by the same agent. They make inquiries and discover that this particular agent has a prison record in another state, including both embezzlement and assault with intent to do bodily harm. They visit the agent, who denies any knowledge of the crime. They are stymied.

The printer's young son, bitter about the murder of his father, breaks into the office of the agent, and steals the list of companies who have made offers, which he takes to the police. Mike pretends anger, officially books the young man for breaking and entering, and has him locked up. Secretly he is delighted. The list is returned to the agent.

Investigation shows that there is an underlying pattern to the company offers. It remains to be seen who is behind the pattern.



The West Coast Junior Executive's wife now realizes her husband's complicity in the murder and leaves him. He is coming apart at the seams. It is revealed that he started out from a small college, and has worked his way up by intense application, and self-denial.

The real-estate agent's role is discovered; the latter in turn reveals his association with the Junior Executive.

The company president returns to town. The young assistant is now able to guarantee the success of the assembly plan: the last of the citizens, terrified by the murder, are selling.

Mike and his partner are ushered in. Mike now accuses the Junior Executive of complicity in the murder of the printer. The president offers him the services of the company lawyer, before he replies, but the Junior Executive is confident of his immunity. Mike quickly lays out the damaging evidence: the Junior has no satisfactory answer, and now turns to the president for help. But the latter's attitude has now changed: he denies any connection, or knowledge, and repudiates his employee.

Sidestreet: "The Rebellion of Bertha MacKenzie"

Broadcast on CBC, May 22, 1976 at 10:00 p.m.

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Résumé of Story

1. The scene takes place in front of a row house, with one woman (Bertha) at the top of the stairs leading into the house, and the other (Miss Meisner) at the foot of the steps. The two are engaged in a vigorous argument. Miss Meisner informs Bertha that her widow's allowance cheque has been cut off because there is a man living in the house, contrary to departmental regulations. She has come down especially to make sure there is no misunderstanding. "You want to run my life," says Bertha angrily. "Go back to your big shot office. You don't tell me, I decide." "You've been lying," says Miss Meisner, "receiving cheques under false pretensions." It is her job to see there is no false representation. Bertha pleads that she is already a month behind in the rent, and the landlord is threatening to evict. She has already received a notice. Miss Meisner asserts that you and "that man" have been cheating the taxpayers. "I don't make the rules," she says. "Get out," says Bertha, "and don't come

back." She re-enters the house where "that man, Tony", who is slouching watching television, asks what the fuss was about. Bertha says this time the welfare lady has gone too far. (Incidentally, Bertha has a pronounced accent which turns out to be Métis.)

2. Back in the office, Miss Meisner has Mr. Rayder on the carpet. Rayder has failed to report the presence in the house of the man. "He's just a friend," protests Rayder. "He's a common law husband, and you know it!" says Meisner. Bertha has not been eligible since last July for the widow's allowance: they have been "shacking up for six months." Rayder protests that with two children, Bertha needs a "man around the house". "Have you read the welfare act?" asks Meisner. "Miss Meisner, I think you should have waited," says Rayder, "Please release the cheque. There are two kids." "I don't play games," says Miss Meisner. "You're lucky you still have a job, Mr. Rayder."

3. Tony, the "man around the house", is lazily watching TV, while Bertha and her two children are beginning to board up the windows. (The two children, a boy and a girl, are aged perhaps twelve and fourteen.) "Tony, you're driving us mad," says Bertha and turns off the TV. Tony offended,

turns it on again. She unplugs it, and he re-plugs, saying "Who's boss in this house?" "You're all crazy half-breeds," he says, "You and the kids and your half-wit brother."

4. In the office of the police inspector, the sergeant is assigned to the case of a woman who is tearing down a fence (Bertha). The sergeant protests at being assigned to such a trivial case.

5. Bertha calls her brother to ask for help.

6. The inspector of police, Woodward, one of the heroes of the series, speaks to Rayder who says he tried to stop Miss Meisner from cutting off the cheque. He says ruefully that Tony eats but doesn't work (which is why the rent cheque was spent on other than rent). It is explained that Bertha is barricading her house.

7. Back in the house, Bertha rejects the idea of moving to another. Tony assists the kids in writing letters on a banner: "At least spell it right, you don't want everyone to laugh at you."

8. There is a scene showing the sergeant who is the other series hero) talking to a stool-pigeon, an incident not clearly related to the present story.

9. The inspector and Rayder talk to Bertha. It is suggested that maybe Tony could move out, at least for a while. Bertha refuses: "Tony's no jewel," she admits, "But it needs a man around to make a family. I won't trade him in. I ain't going." The inspector warns her that she will be moved out Saturday morning. "You'll be moved out!" he says ominously. He moves towards the window. "Take your hands off the boards," she says, and he does. Tony protests that she's talking to a cop, but she says "Out!" The inspector warns her that she can't win. They leave. Tony protests: "What do you think people must do to survive?" "Maybe other people do those things. I don't," she says. There is now a huge banner hanging from the upstairs windows: "We got a right to live too!"

10. Bertha's brother, Oliver, arrives in a convertible and picks up Joey the son, who is out buying groceries, stocking up for the siege. The uncle says to him: "We're blood: trees from the same forest." As the boy gets out, he sees a rifle in the back seat of Uncle Oliver's car. "Are we going to shoot someone," asks Joey. "I hope not," says Oliver.

11. There is another scene with the sergeant concerning



a suspect which again seems unrelated to the present episode.

12.       The inspector pleads with the landlord for leniency. The latter sees no faces: he just has black pens and red pens. "Does Henry Ford attend every car accident?" he asks rhetorically.

13.       Tony is talking to Bertha: "You're good to me," he says, "I appreciate it. You mean a lot to me." She softens briefly, but when he says they should have their own children, she retorts: "Any street bum can make babies, but can they act like a father?" "What's Ollie going to teach them," asks Tony, "to carry a gun, to end up in jail?"

14.       The sergeant seems now to be finished with his mysterious other case. It turns out that he knows Joey, who is on his ball team.

15.       There is a confrontation between Ollie and Tony. Ollie says "There are two sides to the world; the outside and the inside, and one has to choose." Tony says, "You're crazy, you're all crazy." "Nail the door shut, or get out," says Ollie menacingly to Tony. Bertha tries to intervene

to stop the confrontation, but Ollie persists, giving Tony five minutes to get out, if he will not nail the door to.

16. The superintendant, the inspector's boss, is applying pressure; he wants the problem of Bertha resolved quickly.

17. Tony leaves. He pleads with Bertha to take the kids and get out with him, but Bertha tells him she can't let them "push us around". "Tony," she says, "I don't want you to go. I need you. I know I've been rough on you." "I gotta go," says Tony, "Say good-bye to the kids for me."

18. The inspector and the sergeant visit Miss Meisner, to plead leniency for Bertha. "She thinks of herself as a victim." "Bend," they ask. But Miss Meisner is adamant: "Beware of pity," she says, "a bent rule can never be made straight again". Finally, with Tony gone, Rayder persuades Miss Meisner to release the cheque. Meisner says: "Make sure she pays the rent with it!"

19. The press now arrives to cover the event.

20. Rayder and the policemen attempt to deliver the cheque. With Tony gone, Bertha is back on welfare: she

can pay the rent; "Money ain't my problem any more," she says, "Screw your cheque, keep your welfare." Ollie intervenes to talk menacingly of Métis power.

21. The police discuss Oliver Johnson, who is in fact alienated from the Métis community. They must take it slowly; they want no "posthumously decorated heroes."

22. Rayder visits Meisner in her apartment. She offers him a drink. He tells about the brother with the rifle, and Bertha's tearing up of the cheque. "Are you blaming me?" she asks. "What do we do now?" he replies. "Nothing!" she says, "Have a drink." Miss Meisner is feeling emotional: for twenty-two years she has been throwing money at public problems, and she hasn't solved one yet. "Of course I should have ignored the rules," she says bitterly, "I should have lost my job and my pension. Then I could have gone on welfare myself. Maybe I'd be lucky and have you for a social worker!"

23. In the house, the kids are bored and want to go back to school. Bertha reminisces about her childhood in the country. She needs more strength; she misses Tony.

24. Ollie watches the policemen who watch the house. He talks romantically to Joey: "When I take a rifle in my hands, the world listens!" He talks about the old days, and invokes the Métis mystique, talking of the Indian's guardian spirit. "It's hunt or be hunted," he says. "None of our people dream anymore," he adds, "I have a spirit." He then sends Joey out of the house to call his Métis friends. "Tell them the time is now! My spirit will protect you, Joey."

25. Joey slips out of the house and makes the phone call. He is observed by the sergeant.

26. An argument between Bertha and Ollie follows. Ollie recalls how his father used to say, when the going was bad, "Stay in my tracks, Bertha!" He refuses to disclose his plans but warns her of the coming confrontation.

27. Joey and the sergeant talk baseball. The sergeant explains that his mother does not have to stay. He warns that Ollie does not care what happens to them. He will get them into worse trouble. He can't be trusted. Joey, still under the spell of his uncle, says give me a chance, and slips back into the house.

28. Ollie and the inspector engage in a dialogue, with Ollie holding his rifle in two hands and standing outside an upstairs window, legs straddled over a roof. Ollie is prepared for the role of a martyr: "We starve and we win." He is indifferent to calls to reason: "Anyone who tries to get in will be shot," he says.

29. Joey now breaks the news to Ollie that his friends will not come. Ollie at first does not believe him, but Joey repeats: "They said they won't come; they don't want to have anything to do with you." Ollie says "We can do it alone." He then appeals to the boy, calling him "trees of the same forest, blood of my own blood." Is Joey on his side? Yes!

30. Inspector Woodward is being pushed by his superintendent. "Tear gas on children?" says the inspector incredulously to his boss. "I want it settled," says the superintendent.

31. Meanwhile, Bertha decides she has had enough. She wants out. Ollie refuses, saying "We're making history." But Bertha does not want her kids to die there. They matter. "None of us leave this house alive," says Ollie.



32.           Meanwhile the inspector and the sergeant have hit on a plan: the former will engage Ollie in discussion while the latter attempts to slip in the rear window used by Joey for his escape. Joey observes his move, and is about to inform Ollie, but is prevented by Bertha. Sergeant Johnny enters and starts up the stairs, and both men stand pointing guns at each other. It is a standoff. Then Johnny talks Ollie into letting his gun drop, and the confrontation comes to an end. Sergeant Johnny exits with Ollie, and drives him away; Bertha remains in the house.

### Streets of San Francisco (II) and Sidestreet

#### An Interpretation

We shall spend very little time on the Streets (II) episode. By now it will be clear that the episode fits well within the framework we have been developing: the initial crime, the mediating role of the young executive's wife and the victim's son, the ultimate dénouement. As in the other episode of Streets of San Francisco which we considered earlier, the plot has been adapted in a way to suggest a villain behind a villain. The overt "nasty" is the real estate agent; in the tradition of crime drama, he fits the

standard pattern: he has a criminal record, he kills without remorse, etc. In the background is a businessman whose commercial priorities (as in the other episode of Streets considered) result in crime and suffering for which the businessman takes no responsibility because within the context of his system his action is not reprehensible. Between the two is caught the young executive, and through his role in the crime and his subsequent suffering, the programme communicates a message about the inherent contradictions of modern business practice. Streets (II) becomes a parable about the crime committed by big business (the international communications conglomerate) in crushing small business (the printer). In this battle, the role of the police force is associated with traditional institutions such as the court, congress, etc. The message which seems to be communicated is that huge conglomerate business is a menace to the community, and that the only recourse of the latter is to the traditional instruments of democratic action (including the police), but the outcome of the struggle is uncertain: Mike and the corporate president arrive ultimately at a standoff.

The message of Sidestreet defies such simple interpretation; I think, in fact, that Sidestreet

communicates more than one meaning and that the meanings are internally inconsistent.

We note first that it is extraordinarily difficult to sort out what the crime of Sidestreet is. At first glance, it seems that the initial violation of a social code is one of cohabitation by a woman with a man, out of wedlock. According to this interpretation, the authority figure is Miss Meisner and the equivalent to the usual murder in the standard crime drama would be the stopping of the welfare cheque (which is, unlike murder, a reversible offense).

But this first interpretation is not supported by internal evidence. Sympathetic characters such as Rayder, the inspector, the sergeant see the initial crime as actually a benefit (in providing the children with a substitute father). In addition, by the time Tony walks out, there is no longer a sense that his gesture is central to the plot.<sup>I</sup>

One could then argue that the initial crime flows from the intervention of Miss Meisner. It is obvious from the beginning that there exists great antagonism between the two women. From this we could say that, in effect, Miss Meisner uses the power of the cheque to force the separation

<sup>I</sup> Since this was written, it has been pointed out to me (Barbara Leonard, personal communication), that the "crime" is cheating on the welfare rules. This interpretation is well-supported by internal evidence and is more plausible than the ones offered in the text. However, it does not substantially alter my point that the story lends itself to ambiguous interpretation.

of the couple, and hence commits the violation of the social code which is termed "alienation of affection", or more crudely, husband-stealing.

This interpretation is also not well supported. While at first Miss Meisner is seen to be absolutely adamant and vindictive, later it turns out that this apparent obduracy is not motivated by primitive emotions of jealousy and hatred for Bertha, but simply by concern about her job security and pension. She then retracts her position and issues the welfare cheque after Tony has departed, it is true. From this point on, she drops completely out of the story, which means that her "crime" cannot have been central to the story.

The most plausible interpretation is that the initial violation of the social order is the rejection by Bertha of landlord rights. This "violation" then is amplified by the entry of Oliver, through which Bertha's misguided but admirable defense of her family and her home is transformed into a defense of minority rights against the incursions of a foreign dominant exploitative society, exemplified by (1) the landlord (business), and (2) the bureaucrat (government). This is the conflict between community and the alien forces of business and government (which is a reasonable interpretation).

of Métis history) that the inspector and the sergeant (presumably modern Mounties) are called upon to mediate (in the face of extreme pressure and lack of sympathy from their own superintendent).

If this interpretation is correct, then some very ambiguous messages are being communicated.

First, Bertha's "violation". It consists of standing up to an unreasonable bureaucratic requirement. But note what happens. Tony leaves; the bureaucracy, having won, relents (like a good daddy); and Bertha gives in. When she gives in, she is rewarded, by being allowed to keep her family together and presumably to retain her home and her TV set. But she has lost Tony. Tony, who was cynical from the beginning, turns out to have been right: "What do you think people do to survive?" Obviously, they don't fight the system.

The remorseless landlord, for whom people are just a colour of ink, wins, supported throughout by the police, who do not particularly like him or what he stands for, but who recognize the correctness or perhaps the inevitability of his position.



Now consider Oliver's "violation". His "crime" is to stand up too strongly for minority rights. For this he fails to be supported by his own Métis community, not because his position is wrong, but because he is prepared to resort to violent means. He is, in Tony's words "crazy", but we know that Tony is an advocate of accommodation to the system, even when it is clearly unfair. Oliver is not nasty: he does not trick people, he does not kill cold-bloodedly, what he says to his nephew Joey is in many ways admirably romantic. He is simply quixotic, and too extreme.

But when the chips are down, he backs down, like a good boy. His threats to shoot anyone who tried to enter the house are shown to be empty. With all his bluster he is ultimately incapable of holding to his threat.

Again the message: It is useless to stand up!  
Don't fight the system!

In order to understand the potential import of this message, let us make a simple transposition.

Let it be supposed that the landlord stands for Canada's owner (obviously American business). This is not implausible; the landlord is made to say: "Do you think Henry Ford attends every traffic accident?" Thus, he

associates himself with corporate America.

Let us suppose equally that Ollie stands for the forces of Canadian nationalism. Again the parallel is far from completely implausible: Métis nationalism during the nineteenth century was an important force, and could easily stand as a symbol for the endogenous struggle to attain a sense of Canadian identity and original character ("trees of the same forest, blood of the same blood").

The message is that it is all right to organize movements, as long as one does not go so far as to actually disturb the social order. And anyway, for all the bluster, the nationalists will back down in the end.

Is this the Canadian myth?

If so, it should prove reassuring to American investors.

One suspects that the decision to undertake Side-street was motivated by an admirable consideration; possibly it was felt that it would be possible to produce a show, which could be exciting, that was not marked by the extremes of surface violence characterizing American productions, and which would in some sense stay closer to the realities of

ordinary everyday existence, within which, for example, women would be treated more equitably. In such a series, conflicts would be resolved sometimes by compromise, as occurs in ordinary life, rather than by shoot-outs. In this way, Canadian broadcasting might lead the way towards more responsible programming.

The motive is commendable, but I think the reasoning fails to take account of how crime drama communicates its meanings. As we have seen, the episode of Sidestreet analyzed here is susceptible to an interpretation which I doubt is what the authors had in mind. In other words, I think the producers did not understand the importance of the deep structure of the myth, and of the communication process by which meanings are transmitted.

This leads us to our concluding remarks.

Crime drama is an ancient form of message structure; it is found in almost every known human society, exemplified in myths, fairytales, tragedies, novels, etc. It is potentially an immensely powerful form of communication, partly because of the basic simplicity of its structure and rich possibilities of combinations. It is a vehicle for conveying important meanings about social institutions, and

human motive. At the heart of the crime drama there is invariably a theme of violation, which is realized in the surface structure as violence. One cannot remove the violence without weakening the genre's communicative power. What is left, after the violence is gone, is not a sanitized crime drama, or a more "realistic" view of life, but a different genre. Sidestreet fails to be either one or the other.

I think what must be asked is not whether there should be violence on television, or even perhaps how much (although this latter question introduces considerations of a saturation effect, with which I am unprepared to deal here), but rather whether the violence which does appear is justified by the importance of the messages which are being communicated about the society within which we live.

Here I have no doubt personally that, for the most part, and with honorable exceptions, a powerful means of communication of social values has been trivialized, sensationalized, and exploited for commercial purposes.

In the process, other voices have been crowded out.

This, in my view, is the question before the Commission: not how to bowdlerize a respectable genre, that is, crime drama, even further than the network censors already do, but how to assure the availability of alternative forms of artistic expression, including the enrichment of the crime drama itself.



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